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By W. W. CHAPLIN

SEVENTY THOUSAND MILES OF WAR
BLOOD AND INK
WHEN WAR COMES
(A Collaboration)

SEVENTY THOUSAND MILES
OF WAR: *Being One Man's Odyssey on
Many Fronts* *www* by W. W. CHAPLIN



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To BETT

Foreword

THIS IS A WAR BOOK, but it is written in ink instead of blood. This calls for an explanation.

War is a bloody business, and it is proper that this should be impressed upon the people so far behind the actual battle-line that they can not see for themselves. But that doesn't mean that it is the duty of every writer about the war to stress the bloodiness.

I, for instance, am of a generation to which the bloodiness of war is not new. My adolescence was washed away in the blood tide of the last war. I saw my friends die on the wire in France a quarter-century ago; I saw them turn green and then black with mustard gas, and die in agony. I was a gas casualty myself.

Now, in this latest war, I feel that the stories of blood should be told by men to whom blood is new, to whom violent death is new and terrible, to whom any manifestation of war is freshly foul. There are many such men, and already they have written prolifically and well of their reactions to such foulness.

I look at war now in a different way. I know the blood is there, the agony, stupidity, foulness. But now I am

viii...Foreword

looking past that; trying to find out what lies behind. I am interested in causes.

To be quite frank I have not found any answers yet. I have written this book in the hope that perhaps you can find one. In this book I have come to no grand conclusions. I have never been able to say this happened and so that must be true. I have proved nothing. I only hope that I may have explained what happened in such a way that some one may suddenly say, "Why, if that happened, then this must be true."

What I am trying to do in the book is this: I have been on many fronts during this war. I tell you little things that happened; little things that seem typical things to me. I'm trying to give you the background behind the things you've read about, the things you know.

If from these things you can get an insight into war, what it is that makes war, that is all I want. Along my path I have had to go around, or walk through, many pools of blood. I have scarcely mentioned such incidents. I want you to find the causes of that spilling, not the stagnant pools of blood spent, forever lost.

W.W.C.

Contents

FOREWORD	vii
1. BLACKOUT OF PEACE	1
2. IRELAND	5
3. ENGLAND	8
4. FRANCE	11
5. DARK SUMMER	38
6. PACIFIC ISLES	41
7. "DEFENSE"	47
8. AFRICA	53
9. INDIA	73
10. ASIA MINOR	148
11. RUSSIA	159
12. "... LIKE THUNDER"	284
CONCLUSION	286

1. Blackout of Peace

WHEN GERMANY INVADED POLAND on September 1, 1939, swaggering across the last limit of Anglo-French patience and appeasement, I felt the editorial breath hot on the back of my neck.

I was sitting at my desk in the New York headquarters of International News Service, and after the first few bulletins were in about the Polish invasion, I turned to look into the glass-partitioned office of the Managing Editor, Seymour Berkson.

He smiled with a certain grimness and raising one hand jabbed a forefinger at me. I was elected. I was It.

I was at once pleased and distressed at the thought of going back to the wars.

For personal reasons I didn't want to go. My daughters Susan and Josephine were growing girls of high school age. Bett and I had not been married very long, and only a couple of months before we had lost our first baby. It wasn't a kind time to leave.

But professionally I welcomed the opportunity. Since the end of the Ethiopian War in 1936 I had been living a rather sedentary life. Except for a few short-term assign-

2 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

ments to South America and as far across the Pacific as the Philippines, I had been confined to this country for three years. The thought of real action again gave me a tight feeling in the chest, a prickle of excitement down the back.

Whether I liked it or not was really academic. In the news business a reporter doesn't refuse an assignment. Looking back on it now after four years of war I am chiefly interested in the naïve approach I had to the assignment. I wrote an office memo to J. V. Connolly, President of I.N.S. It read:

DEAR BOSS:

Thanks for the swell assignment. No one could want a better job than to sit in on this war and the peace conference to follow it. See you soon.

I apparently thought it wouldn't take much longer to cover than the annual automobile races at the Indianapolis speedway. I seemed to measure it as something future historians might refer to as the Thirty Days' War. But looking back, I don't blame myself too much. At that time, didn't we all?

* * *

Bett took the news with her chin up, like the good soldier she is. I made arrangements with the National Broadcasting Company for some radio work on the side and then I took a Clipper for London. But even before I got there, Germany had won a great victory over the British, one from which it took her three years to recover.

The British people had been nauseated with appeasement. They had watched the Austrian Anschluss and the absorption of Czechoslovakia with rising anger. They heartily approved the ultimatum regarding Poland. When

Poland was invaded despite that ultimatum, they girded themselves spiritually for war.

Germany had threatened to send planes by the hundred over England if war should come. A hundred planes every hour. What a little threat that sounds in this day of thousand-plane raids! But it was an awful threat then, and the British were braced for its fulfilment.

On September 3rd, while Prime Minister Chamberlain was announcing Britain's declaration of war in the House of Commons, the London sirens wailed the signal that Germany was making good its threat.

Then no planes came. There was no raid. It was a terrific let-down, a disastrous anti-climax. *Why, the fellow's just a big bluff.*

If Hitler had struck at London by air on that day he could have killed a few people, perhaps a few hundred. He could have done a little material damage. But the British people were steeled for that. It would have been just the necessary spark to set them on fire. If that had happened, I believe the English, backed by the French, would have marched forthwith into Germany and torn it up, with their bare hands if need be.

But Hitler didn't strike, and so he created a new mentality. He sowed the belief in British minds that he never would strike. *We see through him now, the big faker. He's a school-yard bully, picking on the weak and helpless, but dodging off when the big boys confront him.* The British decided now that their fears, or intuition or whatever, about Germany had been wrong. Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, yes. But Germany would never really dare pit her strength against that of England and France combined, with America always in the background as a probable though tardy ally.

The feeling spread that Hitler had been unmasked.

4 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Really all that was necessary now was to starve the fellow out. *No more trouble actually than blackballing some bounder who's had the audacity to apply for membership in a gentlemen's club.*

So was born the phony war, a war based on the belief that because Germany had not attacked immediately she would never attack at all. The British Expeditionary Force went to France and set up housekeeping along the Belgian border, feeling very secure behind a wall of complacency.

The French, always a more practical people, got behind the concrete walls and flying buttresses of their Maginot Line. Both armies, and the countries they represented, lived for almost eight months in a fools' paradise of false security while Germany consolidated her strength and poised the secret weapon of surprise.

I think that Hitler's failure to make good his boast to bomb London at that time represents the greatest victory of psychological war in history. It took the British three years of terrible and costly disillusionment to regain the offensive spirit. As a result of that same German propaganda victory, France was enchained for more than three years of slavery.

2. Ireland

MY FLIGHT FROM AMERICA TO EUROPE was uneventful, except that on that Clipper I first met Eddie Doherty of *Liberty*. We left Newfoundland at dusk, and the morning sun shone down on the mouth of the River Shannon. Because of the war the Clipper was unable to go farther than the west-coast Irish port of Foynes, so a dozen of us had cabled ahead to Imperial Airways to ask if they could pick us up at Foynes and fly us to England. And as we coasted down to Foynes, where the River Shannon, looking anything but weary, wound endlessly to the sea, we saw a fine Short flying boat waiting for us. It was named the *Aotearea* and had been built for the Australian-New Zealand trade, but it was kept at home when the war broke out.

Eddie had never been in Ireland, but as we approached the land of his ancestors, and some of mine, his brogue became very pronounced. I think I may have let slip a couple of begorras myself, though I had not been in Ireland either. He had one great ambition to be realized at once, and I had another. His came first.

His ambition was to find a shamrock actually growing

6 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

in the "ould sod." The customs guard at the wharf where we were taken from the Clipper in a launch was everything we could have asked for in our first real Irishman. His name was even Paddy. He said he'd find Eddie a shamrock while we were being examined.

"'Tis no more trouble than stooping down to tie your shoe," he assured us.

When we had passed through customs and immigration, there was Paddy waiting for us, and he thrust a bunch of dusty greenery into Eddie's hand. Eddie took one look and objected that this wasn't shamrock.

"Ah, I know, sir," said Paddy with an engaging grin wrinkling his stub of a nose. "There's plenty of shamrock a little earlier in the season. But by now the silly stuff has all turned to clover."

I was luckier about realizing my Irish ambition. I wanted to have a drink of Irish whisky in Ireland, and I didn't care if it was only eight o'clock in the morning.

We walked along Foynes' one street, running parallel to and a little above the beach, and discovered from signs that some hotels were licensed to sell liquors and some were not. We had breakfast at one of the temperance houses and then went to a licensed place.

The proprietress, who didn't seem to think that my ambition was unusual in any way, explained to us that the general sale of drinks did not start for several hours.

"Of course," she added, as if the idea had just occurred to her, "that doesn't apply to guests of the house. Would you by any chance care to be guests of the house? There's an ever-so-nice little parlor but one flight up."

So we went up one flight and sat in the parlor, the shades of which were carefully drawn, and we had our Irish whisky in Ireland, and it was very good.

The flight across Ireland was pure delight. The *Aotearea*

flew at about a thousand feet, and we found that Ireland is indeed an emerald isle. Only occasionally were the neat villages and the green fields marred by freshly dug slit trenches. I think that Eire is the last completely peaceful country I have seen right to this day. What price they may have to pay for the preservation of that peace while all their natural allies have been investing blood in the bank of the future, is another matter.

3. England

WE LANDED IN ENGLAND at the port of Poole, a city filled with evacuee children who seemed rather self-consciously exhilarated by their transplantation. Each child carried a gas mask in a little square box slung over his shoulder.

The ride to London was my first experience of a modern blackout. There was a tiny blue light in the ceiling of each compartment. It offered something to look at but afforded no illumination. We moved in an invisible train across an invisible countryside.

But London was even worse. London was as black as the inside of an uncracked cocoanut. But I did get a cab at last, and the driver somehow got me to the I.N.S. office in Fleet Street. There, behind the painted windows and the heavy blackout curtains, I found old friends and light. One of the friends took me, stumbling along Fleet Street and the Strand, to the Savoy, where a rubber man from Malaya named George Seybold was giving himself a farewell party.

There was a big crowd there, and I was spotlighted as soon as they found I was straight from home. They

wanted to know how soon America was coming into the war, whether President Roosevelt was going to run for a third term, and what his chances were if he did.

I told them that I didn't see any possibility of our entering the war until after the 1940 election, which would be decided on the war issue. And I said that Roosevelt would run again on what amounted to a Wilson he-kept-us-out-of-war platform, and would be reelected by a landslide. After that, I thought, we might come into the war at any time.

George Seybold, the rubber man, told me in a nice way that I'd better have another whisky and soda. Nobody took any stock in my predictions, which were righter than any others I have ever made. It's almost too bad that such cynicism had to be rewarded with confirmation.

It was a talking rather than a drinking party, and I was surprised the next morning to be confronted with all the evidence that I was suffering from hangover. As I pulled back the blackout curtains and faced the thin atmospheric clarity the English know as daylight, dozens of spots danced before my eyes.

I had to shake my head several times, and blink my eyes repeatedly, before I convinced myself that these spots had nothing to do with my condition, that they were a phenomenon of the sky itself. I was seeing the London balloon barrage for the first time.

I had lunch at the Savoy with Bill Brooks, now Director of News and Special Events for N.B.C., and then started my rounds.

It took me about two weeks to get my uniforms and obtain all necessary credentials. A little red book testified that the War Office had issued me license number five as an American war correspondent attached to the British Expeditionary Force in France. I crossed the channel

10 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

in a troopship with the first batch of correspondents to leave England's shore. The troops, mostly farm-boy territorials, sang "South of the Border" and asked each other if everything you'd heard about French women could really be true. "Coo, I do 'ope so."

4. France

CHERBOURG HADN'T CHANGED MUCH since passenger-liner days, except that there weren't any tourists. The rambling hotel at the landward end of the long pier was still open for business, and we crowded the bar for breakfast. Some of the English reporters ordered champagne for all of us. It was a fittingly nonsensical way to embark on our journey through the nonsensical months ahead.

After a great deal of brass hattery and red tape and lost tempers among the poor military wretches assigned to conduct us, we were herded into a fleet of cars, and we took to the road. There was a great deal of hush as to our destination. Somewhere in France; that stuff. We assumed it would be army headquarters, wherever that might be, and hoped there'd be some cots to sleep on.

We drove through what was left of the day, and as dusk was falling we came into what were evidently the suburbs of a considerable city. I know France only spot-tily and had been unable to follow our course, but suddenly one of those strange sensations came to me of having been before just where I was at that moment. There

Headquarters of the British Army turned out to be in the dismal little city of Arras. One of those Joan-of-Arce-slept-here cities with no other particular distinction. I was assigned to the Hotel Continental, a ramshackle three-story affair with eight bedrooms and one bath.

I had good company in that little hotel. There was Webb Miller of the United Press, an old friend from the Ethiopian War; John O'Donnell of the New York *Daily News*, with whom I had worked as far back as the Harry Daugherty trials after the last war; Bill Stoneman of the Chicago *Daily News*, Ed Angly of the New York *Herald Tribune*, Drew Middleton of the Associated Press, Frank Kent, Jr., of the Baltimore *Sun*, and Gavin Moore and Ronnie Monson of Australia. There was almost no one else in the hotel. It was like a club.

And then there was Paule, the waitress-chambermaid-slavey who was seventeen and big for her age. She was full of pride in her nation, and she brooked no liberties from patrons who had dipped their beaks too deeply into the bottles from the hotel cellar.

"Vous devez toujours respecter les femmes françaises."

I saw that admonition wither more than one amorous boarder. But the time came when poor Paule was left weeping on the hotel doorstep, begging American reporters to take her with them from the bombed city before the boches arrived. I wonder if the Germans were willing to respect the *femmes françaises*, or if little Paule learned that they were boches indeed.

Press headquarters for the army under command of General Lord Gort (Fat Boy Gort to his contemporaries at Harrow, but Tiger Gort to the propagandists of the Ministry of Information) was at the Hotel Colonial, half a mile or more from the Continental. A former school-teacher named Reynolds, with the rank of lieutenant

14 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

colonel, was in charge of all affairs journalistic. He made us a little speech.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I think I can safely report that everything is buttoned up. It's all taped. You have been assigned to quarters. We have transportation and drivers available. The censors are here. And we have conducting officers. There will be one conducting officer for each three journalists, to make a carful. The conducting officers are now waiting in the courtyard. I suggest that you arrange yourselves in groups of three and select your own conducting officers."

We went into the courtyard where a wary scatter of officers seemed to be trying to find cover. There was one little bantam of a man with cavalry legs, a weather-beaten face, and a glint in his eye. Almost all the Americans headed for him, and he managed a sickly grin. So we met Bobby Hartman, hero of a dozen crucial battles in the first war, contributor of verse to *Punch*, author of a book on fishing.

"That moment when you came into the courtyard," he told me later, "was one of the most frightening of my life. I just stood there and prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't send me any Americans.' You see, my favorite author is Damon Runyon. So how did I know you would be people? I thought you would be 'characters.' Horse players. Gunmen with ever-loving wives who nevertheless had the most peculiar social customs."

With Bobby Hartman we toured that so-called front for week after week. And every pasture was a battle-field, every gully an ambush. He made the first war so real to us that it was some time before we realized the unreality of this war.

The "front" in that sector was of course no front at all.

That is, it didn't front on the enemy. It was just the Franco-Belgian frontier. And what a frontier!

Technically the frontier was closed, but actually it was wide open. You see, almost all that corner of France was planted in beet-roots, the big turnip-sized beets that are called "sugar beets." But these beets weren't being raised for sugar. This was a nitroglycerine crop, subsidized by the government, and it was just about ready to harvest when war was declared.

With every one off to the war and all, there was a manpower shortage to harvest that crop. And so, every day, early in the morning, the "closed" frontier into Belgium was opened, and about 30,000 peasants came into France to help harvest beets. What the percentage of German spies was I shudder to think.

Even when it was technically closed, that frontier was nothing to make a timid soul feel very secure behind it. There was a tank trap along the whole line, but it was just a sort of deep furrow that I could have jumped over myself if I strained a little. And at intervals along the line there were concrete blockhouses. But they'd been built just too small for the guns that were supposed to go into them, so they'd had to be pretty well chipped open to get the guns in at all. And there wasn't much room to operate them.

I went along on an inspection of that line one day when the King-Emperor was in France. We came to one of those concrete blockhouses, and His Majesty expressed a desire to mount its concrete crest and survey the neutral land beyond. A non-commissioned officer, for some reason of foresight armed with a brand-new broom, sprang nimbly to the top of the blockhouse and swept it clean. Then the King, with some assistance, stepped up and took a royal gander. No fooling, the war was like that then.

16 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

The phony war? John O'Donnell had a phrase for it. He called it as phony as a three-dollar bill.

We naturally began to get pretty bored with all this after a time. We'd come to see civilization blown to bits and rising like the mythical phoenix from its own ashes. What we found was a lot of officers sending home for their cherry-colored dress-uniform pants so they could cut a better figger around town.

We applied to make a visit to the Maginot Line, and the French came through with permission. There were three cars of us on my first trip to the Maginot, and we spent the night on our way at Rheims. That cathedral city was headquarters of the R.A.F.

We stayed at the Lion D'Or, a hotel with a small but very busy bar where champagne was sold over the counter at the equivalent of about fifteen cents a glass. Several glassfuls were sold during the course of an evening. The R.A.F. was an organization that cast no shadow before it of its future greatness.

The next day we drove on to Metz, close to the upper end of the Maginot Line, a mongrel city. Only a geographer could have told whether it was French or German. Though Lorraine had been liberated from Germany for a generation, there was still a strong German flavor to the city. Signs were in German as well as French. Many of the civilians spoke French with a strange accent, as though it were a foreign language.

Our first night in Metz, several of us sat rather late in the café of the hotel. Our waitress was garrulous about the "boches," told us that she herself was born of a Frenchwoman raped by a German soldier. She told us this in French, yet when time came to add up our bill we noticed that in her preoccupation with arithmetic she was murmuring, "*Ein, zwei, drei.*" Then she caught herself

and continued in a self-consciously raised voice, "*Quatre, cinq, six.*"

The government was well aware of this situation, a perilous one on the frontier of an enemy country. Already, we learned, some 400,000 people had been evacuated from Alsace and Lorraine, "for their own safety," and they'd been evacuated clear to the other side of the country—for the safety of France. In the morning we drove to that wonder of the world, the Maginot Line. It's pleasant rolling country around Metz, and it was hard to believe that these hills lying so peacefully in the crisp autumn sun hid the greatest defensive structure of war ever conceived by man.

But they did: they hid it so completely, in fact, that but for our guides we wouldn't have seen it at all. We stopped near a hill that looked to me just like any other hill, but as we approached on foot I saw that there was a great camouflaged steel door at its base. And at various points up its flank there were casements just big enough for cannon. The door swung open, and we walked into the mountain, like the children of Hamelin town.

Looking back on it, I find that the Maginot Line remains one of the most impressive works of man I have ever seen. This hill and a hundred others had been hollowed out, lined with bomb-proof concrete, connected by underground passages, equipped to withstand interminable siege. There were many floors, like the decks of a battleship. The corridors were lined with tile, and along them ran the tracks of a narrow-gauge railway. That was for taking shells to the guns.

This underground world was so vast that the gun crews rode between their "offices" and their subterranean barracks on bicycles. Despatch riders carried military messages from one hill "town" to another on motorcycles. On

18 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

various levels there were mess-halls, recreation rooms, ammunition depots, hospitals. And everywhere guns and guns and guns.

I have been deep in the Maginot Line when it was bombed, and the concrete and earth above us were so thick that we didn't even hear the explosions.

Our principal guide was Captain René de Chambrun, an "honorary" citizen of the United States because he is a direct descendant of Lafayette, and a son-in-law of Pierre Laval. He told me that the line was so stocked that, even if it was surrounded and besieged, the garrison could continue to fire every gun twenty-four hours a day for three months.

I found this confidence reflected in the soldiers of the concrete forts. They thought they were the lucky ones. The ordinary *poilu* must expect to fight in mud, to be mowed down in the open by machine-gun fire, to charge through barbed wire, to be bombed from above. But these specialists would do their fighting in comfort and perfect safety.

I couldn't possibly have believed at that juncture that within six months these same self-confident soldiers would be streaming out of the blasted back doors of their "impregnable" hills, hands high in helpless surrender.

The outer defenses of the line impressed me even more than the inner strength. An attacking army would have to come up an open slope cleared of all trees and buildings, easy target for the bristling guns of the forts. Along the close approach there was a thick strip of what the French called "asparagus," railroad rails buried half their length in the ground and with their bottom ends attached to mines. Tanks pushing against those rails would detonate mines beneath big enough to tear the stomach out of them.

And inside this row of asparagus was the greatest tank trap ever built. This was a real trap—none of the make-shift defense works here such as the British inherited along the Belgian border.

This tank trap was a concrete ditch about thirty feet deep, with almost vertical sides, and far too wide for any tank to span. The tank trap and the asparagus marched side by side over the hills, bounded only by the horizon.

All these hills were capped with a great steel plate known to the French as a *cloche* or bell. These caps concealed the really big guns. Captain de Chambrun had an exhibition staged for us.

Operated from within, the steel caps of several hills suddenly moved upward about three feet from the crest, and beneath them rose the big guns. They turned slowly this way and that, like prehistoric monsters scanning the countryside for possible prey. Then they as silently disappeared under the lowered caps.

After our little play barrage, the Germans began shelling a hill half a mile away. There seemed to be a small village there, with a church spire rising from a huddle of houses.

"It must be 11:30," Captain de Chambrun remarked.

We looked at our watches, and he was right to the minute.

"They always shell that village at 11:30 in the morning and at 3:30 in the afternoon," he said. "There isn't anything there. All the people were evacuated the day after war was declared. We just left the buildings to give the idea it might be a headquarters of some kind. I don't believe the Germans really believe that; they certainly know all our headquarters are far underground. But they like to play soldier, and that offers a target, so they shoot

20 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

at it. Being a methodical people, they've put the firing on a schedule."

I must confess that no one was more gullible than I about the value of the Maginot Line. I wrote long stories about it and was spendthrift with words like "impregnable," "invincible," and "indestructible." I have never used those words since about any defenses.

Of course I found out bad things about the Maginot Line as well as good ones. We heard, for instance, that about a quarter of the money expended on it was wasted in political graft. And the line had cost enough to build the biggest navy in the world, if France had cared to spend the money that way.

We were also told that every secret of the fortifications was known to the enemy. The government had let contracts for its construction to civilian firms which were left free to use any labor they liked. They took the labor they could get cheapest, which seemed for some strange reason to be largely German labor. Many a German spy must have worked up blisters on his hands and aches in his back wielding pick and shovel in those fantastic hollowed hills.

We knew all this about the Maginot, and we naturally were not blind to the fact that it ended short of the perfect terminus, which was of course the sea. But it was an era of self-deception, and we fooled ourselves with the thought that after all the line did cover the actual German frontier. To by-pass it, it would be necessary to invade neutral Holland and Belgium. If Germany did invade the Low Countries, surely there would be time to march into Belgium and settle the battle there.

Belgium was a very sore point with the British and French. They gave the impression that they believed Bel-

gium was doing a diplomatic tight-rope act and might jump on either side, to join the Allies or the Axis. We weren't even allowed to mention Belgium in our despatches or broadcasts, lest something inadvertently be said which would turn the Belgians in the wrong direction.

Personally, I don't think there was ever any question about Belgium's pro-Ally sympathies. They love only neutrality more. We had good evidence of this at one point during that dismal winter, when Germany staged a little bluff to find out just what the British had.

They began massing troops as though for an invasion through the Low Countries. The British recognized it for the ruse it was, but they had to oblige. If they hadn't, Germany might well have come on charging through.

So the British pulled all their armor and guns out of concealment well behind the lines and marshaled them along the Belgian border. Of course it was described in full detail to Germany through espionage channels. That's all Germany had wanted to know, so the concentration of mock invasion was dissolved. The British knew their hand had been forced but tried to take comfort in the fact that at least after Germany had taken a look she did withdraw. *Why, perhaps Germany was afraid. Boo!*

The British knew they had been tricked, even though they couldn't do anything about it. But of course the plain Belgian peasantry didn't know what this high-powered maneuvering was all about. They thought Germany really was coming in, and that England was ready to come in on the other side.

And those peasants came running to the three main roads across the Franco-Belgian border which Britain planned to use if she ever did go into Belgium. According to the customs of neutrality, those roads were bar-

22 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

ricaded at the border with great cement blocks set into the earth and rising high enough to stop the passage of vehicles. The Belgian peasants brought sledges and smashed those concrete road blocks, and they heaved the pieces into the ditch with their bare hands. They opened the roads to let the British in.

We had been in France two months or so when Colonel Reynolds called us in one day and told us he had a big story.

"You are now in a position to state," he said, "that after almost a quarter of a century British blood has once more flowed on French soil in our common cause."

We asked for details, but all we got was that military smile which seems to whisper of "security" and "spies" and "comfort to the enemy." Colonel Reynolds said he was not in a position to tell us more than that several British soldiers had been killed and others wounded while carrying out a mission in front of the Maginot Line.

We found out later that a British patrol had walked at night into a land-mine booby trap, a trap set by the British themselves to catch German patrols. Things like that happen in all armies, but they don't make very dramatic war news, even when cloaked in such literary verbiage as Colonel Reynolds handed us.

Sitting around the table at the Continental on many evenings we used to discuss the likelihood of action, and what would happen then. There were those who thought the greatest rampart against invasion was the B.E.F., for all its smallness, because it was so thoroughly mechanized. It had, in fact, only four horses. Those horses were for Lord Gort, the Duke of Gloucester, and their equerries. They were parade horses for a parade that never was.

Others of our company, and with these I sided, held that the B.E.F. was overmechanized, that the French were wiser in having both motorized and horse-drawn units. In fact, it was my belief that Allied hope in the event of invasion lay largely with the French Army generally.

I had fought in France in the first war, and this generation of poilus seemed just the same as those I had known in my youth. I even saw virtue in their slovenly appearance and unmilitary manner.

I remembered that the French at Verdun had been no dandies, and the men of the Marne had no likeness to Beau Brummel. There is nothing nattier than the average French officer, and there is nothing less natty than the average French soldier. This was even more true in this war, because of mixed uniforms. The high command had finally decided that the khaki color of England and America was better camouflage than the traditional horizon blue of the French Army, so khaki-colored uniforms had been ordered. But the French are a thrifty race: all old uniforms had to be worn out in service before they could be replaced by new. The result was that half the soldiers wore brown and half blue. And a blue blouse was often worn with brown britches, or vice versa.

Also, when a French soldier is off duty he is all the way off. It was not at all unusual to see a poilu walking down the street leading a goat with one hand, carrying a long loaf of bread under the other arm, and with a limp cigaret hanging out of his unshaven face. Nor did they bother with saluting. One British colonel told me that if a French soldier went so far as to remove the cigaret from his mouth in passing, he considered that tantamount to calling out the guard in the British Army.

I still don't agree with younger critics, who never knew the first war, that this behind-the-lines disregard of disci-

24 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

pline among the French soldiers had anything to do with the collapse. The French soldier just knows when it's important to be disciplined and when it's a fine relaxation to let it blow down-wind. I still think the French fighting man is one of the finest fighting men in the world, and that before this war is done he will have amply proved it.

There were other things about this France of 1939 which disturbed me far more. It seemed to me that Nazi poison had flowed into the country in alarming quantities—such poison as anti-Semitism. Along toward Christmas time we were joined at the Continental by a reporter for the Paris *Soir*, a man of experience and ability. He was a Jew.

The morning after his arrival there were large chalk signs on the walls of the hotel which read:

"A bas les juifs."

And no matter how often we erased those signs they were always back again the following morning. The object of this nasty Nazism never gave any sign that he was aware of the sneak campaign against him. I was disturbed by the implication that he had become accustomed, and hardened, to such treatment, in France.

I think of all our group only one man realized the real seriousness of world affairs. That was Ronnie Monson, a rugged Australian who just for fun had walked from Cairo to the Cape a few years earlier. Ronnie never fell for the "phony war" myth.

"We're fighting for our very existence," he used to say with controlled violence that seemed always about to erupt. "To hell with all this talk about how we're fighting the Nazi government and not the German people. They're not fighting the British government or the French govern-

ment. They're planning to wipe us off the earth, and it's the whole German people that plan that. It's them or us, and here we sit around waiting for them. We ought to go in there and tear them to pieces."

We knew better than that, of course. We knew that really no one wanted this war. Evidently no one wanted to fight. It hadn't begun yet, and here we were already in a stalemate.

How could we have forgotten so soon? Austria was forgotten, and Czechoslovakia, and the rape of Warsaw. There had been tens of thousands of men, women, and children murdered by the Germans in senseless slaughter, and yet we called it a phony war.

Even Norway and Finland didn't change things much for the people who had been soaked in the Maginot mentality. Some of the reporters left to cover those campaigns, and all the rest of us tried to get our offices to send us. We who weren't sent settled back into a dream life as drugged as though induced by the poppy's infamous by-product.

At that time I was writing a daily diary for I.N.S. as well as sending spot news despatches, if any. Looking back over that diary I can find only two indications that I ever had any insight into the true situation, any realization of what lay ahead.

On January 3, 1940, I find I began my diary with these words:

"The war has been going on for four months to-day. In other words, we have traveled just about half-way to hell."

Considering that the Germans broke through into the Low Countries on May 10th, that statement seems almost psychic. From a distance of four months I had come within seven days of calling the date.

26 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Several weeks later I wrote in my diary about attending a vaudeville show for the soldiers in the Arras music hall, what the Tommies call a "concert." I was sincerely moved by the abandon with which these boys laughed at old vaudeville chestnuts; in fact, it seemed to me that the older and better-known the jokes were the louder the laughter. I looked down at them from a balcony and wondered suddenly how many of them would ever see England again. And the next day I wrote in my diary an account of this performance, which began:

"I listened to-night to the laughter of the living dead."

And those were the men, many of them, who died on the beach at Dunkirk less than three months later.

Only twice in all those months can I find that I had even a glimpse of what was to come. I cite this not because I take any masochistic pleasure in proving how stupid I am, but because I believe my stupidity was a part of the whole Allied stupidity of that day. There was an epidemic of stupidity in France.

From a newspaper and radio viewpoint the days in France before the German break-through were very dull. But that doesn't mean that they were uniformly dull for living. There were many bright moments. There were, for instance, week-ends in Paris which would have been impossible if the news tide had been at flood.

Paris was at most blued out, and not too much of that. I stayed sometimes at a little walk-up hotel on the Left Bank called the Montana, and other times at the Ritz or the Crillon, which at military rates were little more expensive. I had always been fond of the Place de la Concorde, and I still liked it even with its hundreds of lamps hooded. On several occasions I was able to get the same

big room on the third floor looking out on the Place. I later had a sensation of acute personal affront when the first pictures were shown of German occupation of Paris and an X marked the room in the Crillon assigned to Hitler. It was my room.

You could always find Americans at Harry's Bar in the Rue Daunou or at the Café Flore on the Boulevard St. Germain. A dozen of us often wound up at the eagle-nest garret apartment of Ray and Mary Brock on the West Bank late at night. Every guest brought a bottle of wine, because Ray and Mary were very broke right then. Since that time Ray has become a distinguished correspondent in the Near East for the *New York Times*, and Mary did good work for the N.B.C. out of Ankara. But then their worldly assets consisted entirely of high spirits and self-confidence, and we had some good evenings in their little hovel under the eaves. Ray and Mary are about the best Conga dancers I know. We'd play an old gramophone, and they'd dance, and we'd sit around on the bed and the floor and the window-sill, and talk.

I remember sitting on that window-sill one night, when new snow lay soft on the rooftops, and looking up at the stars. So peaceful. And yet out of that sky, perhaps in two minutes, perhaps in a week, sometime, anyway, were almost certain to come big bombers to spread death through this city now so quiet and seeming safe.

I was really getting good and sentimental about this, and even thinking I might work up a story or a broadcast on this theme, when Mary screamed. And sizzled. As you know, every terpsichorean stanza of the Conga is punctuated with a provocative dislocation of the outside hip. And Mary had dislocated her hip right up against the little coal stove which furnished the only heat of that bohemian attic. It wasn't serious, but if it had been dinner-

time I think we could have served roast hip of Mary as the main dish.

It was in Paris during this time too that I had the Duke and Duchess of Windsor paraded for my benefit. The Duke had been given a courtesy rank of major general and was assigned to Paris, not permitted at the Front lest his appearance stir up old pros and cons. I hadn't seen him since his marriage.

I was having dinner one night at the restaurant of the Fontaine Gaillon, an old favorite of mine. There are two downstairs rooms in this restaurant, connected at the rear by a staircase that leads to small upper dining-rooms. Each of the downstairs rooms has a door to the street. We were sitting in the downstairs room that has the little service bar and the *caisse* in it.

Pierre, the proprietor, whom I had known a long time, confided to me in a pleased whisper that the Duke and Duchess were in the adjoining room. I said I'd like to see them, but I didn't want to go to the connecting door and just stare.

"I will arrange that," said Pierre. "It is almost closing time. I will have the street door of that room locked now. Then all the guests will have to come through this room to depart."

In a few minutes the Duke and Duchess appeared, preceded by Pierre explaining about rigid wartime restrictions which necessitated closing first one door and then the other. They squeezed between the foot of the stairs and the cloakroom and passed so close we could have patted them, or tripped them up if that had been our fancy. The Duke was in his general's uniform and looked better, less baggy around the eyes, than when I'd seen him years before. The Duchess wore a simple dinner dress and seemed entirely unself-conscious. She must have

grown accustomed to having eyes focused on her. I wondered how they would have acted if they had been told they were detoured through that crowded room for the sole benefit of two American war reporters. Would they have been angry, or amused? Anyway, it was a good parade.

On one of our many trips to the Maginot Line from the British sector, I stopped off with two other reporters and Bobby Hartman, our conducting officer, to inspect the fortress of Verdun. The sunken forts of Verdun were really the forerunners of the Maginot Line, and in the first war they had proved impregnable. The Germans stormed that citadel with everything they had, and a million men or so died on either side in demonstration that it could not be captured. After we saw the forts, Bobby took us just out of town to a place which interested me far more. That was the trench of the bayonets, one of the grimmest relics of the other war.

On a hill back of Verdun there was an L-shaped trench in which a forward company of French infantry was stationed to take the first shock of each new charge on Verdun, and to make frequent attacks of their own on close-in German positions.

Such a French sortie was planned one day when the main German forces were very close to the city. The company was lined up in the trench, standing at attention, waiting for the whistle that would send them over the top. It was a deep trench, and only the upper halves of the bayonets on those poilus' guns were visible above the ground.

Before the signal to attack was given, some mammoth of the German artillery landed a giant shell very close to that trench. It was the kind of shell the A.E.F. of those

30 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

days called an "ash can." The force of the explosion was so great that the earth moved sideways under the impact, moved in the direction of least resistance, which was toward the opening of that L-shaped trench. The trench simply closed up.

The only remaining sign that there had ever been a trench there was a long L composed of 120 bayonets protruding from the ground.

Despite the loss of that company, Verdun was held. The Germans at last were driven back, and the war was won. But the trench of the bayonets remained as a national monument. The dead were never disturbed; they were the first "unknown soldiers" to become official national heroes. Their identity was of course known to the French Army, because they were all the men of one specific company. But it was kept an official secret, lest relatives demand the bodies of their dead ones and so destroy a symbol of France, an unconquerable France facing the enemy with gun in hand even in death.

One of my chief relaxations during the damp chill of that winter was attending a British spy market in Lille. One of our conducting officers had been early detached from nurse-maiding reporters for "special duty." I had become very friendly with him before he left us, so when he became lonely in Lille he got word to me where he was stationed and asked me to call.

His mission was secret, and I don't suppose he should have told me about it. Certainly he shouldn't have invited me to sit in on his spy-buying sessions. But as I said, he was lonely and wanted companionship. The people who deal in espionage too often ape the flamboyant methods of spy fiction and overlook the simplest rule of all. If you want to make a man talk, don't bother to ply him with

liquor; disregard bribery; eschew seduction. Just get him good and lonely, and he will run off at the mouth like a leaky faucet.

Because this spy merchant shouldn't have revealed his business to me, even under the impulsion of loneliness, I will not tell who he is. I'll just call him Joe, which is not his name.

I called on Joe as soon as I was able to get one of the cars assigned to us for a whole evening. I drove to Lille through the steel-mill country which no wartime needs could black out because the furnaces threw an orange glare against the sky. The mines and mills of that region were manned, for common labor, largely by Poles who had come there before the war. Already General Wladyslaw Sikorski was busy there, a human whirlwind in the square-topped cap of the Polish Army, recruiting miners and mill hands for a Polish Army in exile.

Joe and I had dinner at the Carleton, the gayest and best hotel in this provincial capital whose inhabitants boast it is the "Little Paris" of France. And then we repaired to the night club where Joe seemed to have a table permanently reserved.

I thought Joe must have worked up an awful thirst since he left Arras, for I knew he was a temperate man: he ordered three bottles of champagne. But I soon found that he had reason. One after another, the little dancing girls of the various acts would stop at our table between numbers, and Joe invited all hands to help themselves.

When I heard Joe whisper an invitation to one of these girls to come up to his apartment after the show I was surprised. Joe was pretty choosy. When I heard him invite a second one, I was still more surprised and began talking about Bett so no one would get any false ideas. When his invitations numbered five I thought he must have

32 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

gone off the rails and be living under the happy delusion that he was the reincarnation of Lucullus.

Joe's suite in the Carleton was far more sumptuous than a British major can usually afford. And there was more champagne there, dusty bottles in a whole row of silvered ice buckets.

Then the girls came in, one by one and without knocking. The door would simply open and close like the shutter of a camera, and there would be another girl. They all seemed cut pretty much from the same pattern, like gingerbread ladies stamped out with a cookie die. They were pretty, shapely, professionally vivacious, and of no particular nationality. I don't mean that one was French, another Belgian, and a third Hungarian. They all seemed to be all those things, and more.

These cabaret girls of Continental Europe are a gipsy folk who follow the circuit from one country to another, speak half a dozen languages, and have wits sharpened by necessity and their way of life. Even in war they were able to cross frontiers which were closed to belligerents. From France, for instance, they went to dance next week in Belgium, and the week after that they would be back in France. Sister dancers would be passing at the same time between Belgium and Germany. It was a spy network, ready made.

Joe talked to one girl after another, unostentatiously cutting her out of the herd and isolating her. You might have thought that he was making love to one after another, he whispered with such evident intensity of persuasion. But there was a deadly earnestness in his face that spoke of grimmer affairs than love. In almost every case the mock love scene ended with an abrupt nod from the girl, a murmured "*Bien, c'est entendu.*" And he would move away, leaving her sitting taut and solemn, the

make-up standing out like bas-relief on the sudden pallor of her face. On one occasion I would have sworn that there were patches of green beyond the corners of one girl's mouth. I've seen that color occasionally on battlefields. It indicates devastating terror.

Finally the last interview was finished, the last bottle of champagne was emptied. Joe strolled to the door and opened it casually, glanced up and down the corridor which was blacked out except for a tiny bulb at the far end. Then he turned out all the lights in his room. No word of farewell was said. The girls stood in line near the door and at regular intervals stepped through and disappeared. Like paratroopers leaving a plane above enemy territory.

Joe shut the door and turned on the lights. First he went into the bathroom and scrubbed his hands with the thoroughness of a surgeon. Then he set a bottle of whisky on the table and poured about four fingers into each of two glasses.

The room smelled of stale smoke and theatrical make-up and spilled champagne. There was also an acrid odor I could not place. They say dogs can smell some emanation given off by human beings when they are afraid. I think perhaps I smelled fear that night. Blackout restrictions prevented our raising a window to air the place.

"Let's get absolutely stinkeroo, old boy," said Joe, and he took his first four fingers at a gulp, which was pretty good for a fellow more accustomed to ginger beer or a light brown sherry.

Joe is a big fellow, well over six feet and close to two hundred pounds. His health is absurdly good. But I knew I was sitting up with a sick friend that night, so I stayed along beyond the termination of my pass, taking a chance on talking my way past the M.P.'s.

"What a filthy business war is," Joe said between drinks of straight whisky. "And this is the filthiest part of it. This assignment was orders. I couldn't do anything about it.

"Do you realize," he said, "that some of those girls certainly, and quite possibly all of them, will be shot as spies because of what I argued them into doing to-night? Of course we pay them handsomely, but money won't help them if the Germans find out what they're up to."

He got up and went into the bathroom again. I could hear him scrubbing his hands almost hysterically with a nail brush.

When I thought he was drunk enough to be safe in his own company I said I'd have to go. He made his way to the door with me and leaned against the wall. Suddenly an almost girlish giggle bubbled up from his bass-drum chest.

"The funny thing is," he said, "that likely as not the little bitches are working for the Hun, too."

Then he closed the door very quietly, and I walked quickly down the dim corridor.

I found only one place in all France in those long winter months where the people generally lived with the fear that war, real war, was close. That was Abbeville.

We had made a trip to Dieppe under "conduct" of Major Fairlie and Captain Balbernie, British officers with a Hollywood background. Fairlie was the original of "Sapper's" Bulldog Drummond stories, and after "Sapper's" death he continued to write them himself. Balbernie had done very well as a writer in America, too. They understood America and Americans, so we were perhaps more "at home" with them than with Bobby Hartman, though I think we loved him best of all. It is

rather hard to try to live up to an expectation of being Runyon "characters" all the time.

On the way back from Dieppe we decided to drop in on the R.A.F. fighter squadron stationed on the edge of Abbeville, and we came into the town's *place* at noon just as the loudest sirens ever built let loose with a whoop and a holler. In other parts of France, right up close to the line, in fact, people had long since ceased to pay any attention to air-raid warnings. There had been no bombings, and so there never would be any. No one carried gas masks. This was the phony war. Phooey to it.

But it was different in Abbeville. No sooner did those sirens start wailing in mad crescendo from the roof of the Hôtel de Ville than men, women, and children started running in panic for the bomb shelters. They left bicycles lying in the street, and babies were snatched from prams which were abandoned where they stood.

By the time the guns sounded and white puffs of anti-aircraft shells blossomed in the sky, that Place and the surrounding streets were absolutely cleared of all except jettisoned equipment: bicycles, baby carriages, half-filled market baskets, umbrellas, hats, and even a couple of pairs of wooden shoes.

We parked and lined up with our backs to a wall to watch what was going on. The ack-ack made pretty puff-ball gardens in the sky. And occasionally there was a sparkle as a turning plane reflected a shaft of light our way. But there was no bombing. It was probably a reconnaissance, perhaps a photographic, mission.

When we expressed surprise at this unusual public panic, Balbernie called our attention to a monument in the center of the Place. It was a cast-iron mold of some local hero of the past, and he was sitting on his granite

pedestal with his head in his lap and one of his legs lying in front of him.

We walked to the middle of the Place to read a plaque on the base of the monument. This told us that a score or so citizens of Abbeville had been slaughtered by German bombs in 1917. The statue, it said, had been broken in that raid. It had never been repaired, so that the people of Abbeville might have a constant reminder of German bestiality.

That of course explained the panic. These people had been born and brought up in the shadow of proof that war means death and destruction from the sky. So when enemy planes came over they expected an immediate repetition of that raid of long ago.

It seemed a needless fear just then. But actually it was only premature, not unfounded. Little more than two months later Abbeville was not merely damaged by bombs, with a few people killed or injured. In the German break-through Abbeville was wiped out by bombs, its people massacred.

When that unusually severe winter, atmospherically speaking, was reluctantly retreating before a half-hearted offensive launched by spring with seeming timidity, I came down with a case of flu and wound up in the American Hospital in Paris.

When I was ready to leave the hospital the doctor told me I couldn't go back to the front until I'd had a month or so of sunshine. Bett had been trying to get to Paris ever since the war began and had finally got as far as Bermuda. I flew to join her in Bermuda, and by that time her passport for France had come through.

I had encouraged her in her efforts to move to Paris. I thought it perfectly safe. Only a series of lucky occur-

rences saved her from being there when the city was taken. My office wanted me to return to New York from Bermuda before going back to France, so we did that. And before we could leave New York there was no France to go back to.

Ronnie Monson, the Australian who had more foresight in most things than the rest of us, did get caught by that break-through, just as I would have if I hadn't got the flu. After efforts almost as strenuous as Bett's, Stella Monson got to Paris from London. And when the balloon went up, as the British say of the German break-through, Ronnie was evacuated from Boulogne, below Dunkirk, and Stella was caught in Paris.

He couldn't even cable her direct. For weeks he was sending cables for her to I.N.S. in New York, and we were relaying them to Paris. She replied in the same way. They were only some fifty miles apart, but their messages had to travel six thousand miles. By some diplomatic jugglery Ronnie finally did get Stella out, but I'm glad I didn't have to go through that with Bett.

5. Dark Summer

THAT WAS A DARK SUMMER, that summer of 1940. Holland, Belgium, France, Norway, and Denmark—all gone the way of Poland. Finland pushed toward the Axis by the war with Russia. The Balkans coming under or-else domination of the Axis. And America standing aloof, waving encouragement to England and selling scrap-iron to Japan.

American hearts bled for Britain during the Dunkirk evacuation. American admiration was unstinted for Britain's courage. The RAF was the toast of the world. But the isolationist sentiment was far too strong to be overlooked by any politician. And it was election year. I went to the conventions.

Philadelphia. Willkie. If I'm elected . . . I was in the last war myself. I know what it means. None of these boys of ours to-day . . . Not if I'm elected.

Chicago. Roosevelt. No American boys will be sent to fight in foreign wars. *L I A K*

Ladder words, each one constructed with a built-in escape. *This isn't a foreign war; this is an American war, by lucky chance on foreign fields.*

I am cynical enough so that I can generally take politics, however pernicious, more or less in stride. But there was another sort of nonsense early in that summer that did upset me badly. That was the ill-advised entry of Italy into the war by stabbing falling France in the back.

Five years before the war, I had worked in Italy for more than a year. After that I had been attached to the Italian armies in Ethiopia. I disapproved thoroughly of the Italian Government. I disapproved thoroughly of the Ethiopian invasion. But I loved Italy, and I liked the Italian people.

I knew a lot of Italian officials in New York, and I often used to lunch with them at a mid-town restaurant—people like the Consul General and Ugo D'Annunzio, son of the late patriot-poet who held some sort of undefined post with the Italian Government here. And a lot of people attached to the Italian "information bureau," an adjunct of the Consulate. One of these was Gigi Paladini de Marais, whom I had known a long time, and with whom I had campaigned in Ethiopia. At one of our luncheons I asked Gigi how Italy could ever have made the disastrous mistake of throwing in her lot with the German "barbarians," as I knew the Italians generally considered them. He gave me the following explanation. I don't relay it with the guarantee that it represents the Mussolini viewpoint. But Gigi was in a position to know, and other higher Italian officials who were present made no denial.

"We haven't thrown in our lot with Germany against France," he said. "We have sided with Germany now as a first step in a program which will end with us being in alliance with France and giving Germany a kick in the pants."

At least that sounded as original as it was ridiculous. I

40 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

asked him how he expected to form an alliance with France by kicking her when she was down.

"That was necessary," he said. "What we want above all is a Latin Union in Europe composed of Italy, France, and Spain. With an Axis like that we could dictate to Germany and England and any one else. But France is all filled up with democratic and Bolshevik nonsense which has got to be beaten out of her. A military defeat will do it.

"We think that Germany will win the war, so we join her and help beat France and England. After the war France will be ready for Fascism, and so we and France and Fascist Spain will combine to turn on Germany and push her into oblivion. England will be both beaten and bled white. She won't matter any more. America isn't going to count in this war. Democracy has softened her up. She can't fight."

I offer that only as an interesting sidelight. Personally I wouldn't be a bit surprised if that was the Italian grand strategy. The grand strategy, that is, of the Fascist government. I don't think the Italian people ever wanted to enter the war against France or even England; certainly they didn't want to be in a position where they might have to fight America. That has been well demonstrated by the mass surrenders, even before they became necessary, in North Africa.

6. *Pacific Isles*

SHORTLY AFTER THE CONVENTIONS I was assigned to make a tour of the Pacific, to find out how we might be expected to fare "just in case."

I found the Australians and the officials of the Dutch East Indies thoroughly worked up about the danger from the Orient, and doing everything they could about it. I found the British not at all worked up in Singapore but doing at least something about the situation anyway. I found that apparently America was not worked up at all and was doing practically nothing.

Hawaii was as lovely as ever, so lovely that it didn't seem reasonable that this beauty could ever be marred by so rude a thing as war. There was some construction going on at an airfield adjoining the Pearl Harbor naval base, and I was told of a plan for quick dispersal of all planes to fields on other islands in case of an attack. But nothing big, nothing serious, nothing really more up-to-date than the old First World War coast artillery pieces which still encumbered the forts.

"The big plan," one officer told me, "is to abandon the

42 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

island of Oahu as soon as there is an attack, if there ever is one. The ships all leave Pearl Harbor and get out in the open where they can deal with anything the enemy has. And the planes scatter to other islands from which they could operate better than from the congested fields on the edge of Honolulu."

I asked about the troops stationed at Schofield Barracks up on the hill. How were they going to get to other islands?

"Oh, well," I was told, "after all, there aren't very many troops. Just a few thousand. I suppose they'd stay and fight it out."

That was Hawaii a year and a half before "Pearl Harbor."

Coming down into the harbor at Auckland, New Zealand, I had the strange sensation that a year had been wiped out, that it was still September of 1939, that Holland, Belgium, France, Dunkirk were all a dream. Because it was just like coming down at Foynes in Ireland.

Our Clipper swung around above the harbor, and there below us lay a Short flying boat just as it had in the River Shannon. And when we slid on to the water and taxied close I saw with astonishment that it actually was the same Short flying boat, the *Aotearea*, built for the Australian trade and then held in England because of the war, but now in the service for which it was intended.

So I rode across the Tasman Sea to Australia, wrapped in blankets against the cold of a 15,000-foot altitude, in the same plane that had taken me low-level across the Irish Channel to England.

Australians are accustomed to great expanses, and distance doesn't impress them. The mere fact that they were then on the opposite side of the world from war

didn't blind them to the fact that it might swoop on them at any moment.

Already Australian volunteers were fighting in Africa and were standing by in England and Malaya. The Australian Navy had been in action far from home. Recruiting was proceeding full blast, and everything possible was being done to get war materials from America. There must be something clairvoyant about Australians. Ronnie Monson had been the only one of us in France who realized the seriousness of the situation during the "phony war." I found a general realization in Australia itself that this was no play war, but a fight to the finish.

Australia is as big as the United States, with a population smaller than that of New York City. They couldn't do very much for themselves, but they were doing everything they could. General MacArthur didn't have to start from scratch when he went there from Corregidor eighteen months later. He had a people to work with who were at least spiritually prepared for war, because they'd seen it coming a long time.

This realization of the danger hanging over the Pacific extended throughout the Dutch East Indies. In Java, Sumatra, even Borneo and Celebes, I found officials striving in every way to prepare against invasion. But they had even less to do it with than Australia. It wasn't a population problem there: there are some sixty million people in the Indies. But the great majority of those are natives who then knew nothing of "civilized" war. And industries are few.

Java had the mountain air base at Bandoeng, with one good-sized munitions factory and an excellent airfield. But their guns were old if not obsolete, and there were few modern planes. There was a great naval base at

44 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Surabaya, but there were few ships and no way of defending the base. The only defense against parachute attack at the base, for instance, was a thick planting of sharpened bamboo stakes. If Japanese paratroopers had been considerate enough to leave their planes directly over the base they might have been impaled on those stakes. But if they landed a mile back from the harbor, or along the shore, there was no defense against them.

Dutch officials were begging for supplies from America, and they were getting a few, a pitiful few. They never did get enough to have a chance when the attack finally came.

The good fathers of Singapore had apparently satisfied their consciences by ringing the hundred-mile coastline of the island with barbed wire and setting up some hundreds of pill-boxes with machine-guns inside. There were some larger guns also.

After arranging that, they had returned to their gin slings at the Raffles or the Swimming Club, and were apparently a bit embarrassed at having made even so much concession to the silly notion that Japan would ever attack this bastion of Empire.

Manila was not prepared for defense at all. Hampered by lack of money and equipment, General MacArthur had concentrated on Bataan and Corregidor. That concentration was the only thing that made possible the heroic but hopeless defense of the suicide peninsula and the island fort.

But if all those other places were badly prepared for war, our island possessions, our key stepping-stone islands across the North Pacific, were criminally weak. The big island of Guam. No fortifications. No armed forces. No planes or guns or other military equipment. Nothing. And this was our outpost in the Orient.

I talked to the Navy captain who was then Governor of Guam, chief of some 20,000 natives who looked to us to protect them, and asked him if he believed the island could be defended.

"Sure, he said, "but it would cost a lot of money, and Congress has been turning down that appropriation year after year."

I asked him what his duties were if he had no way to work for the defense of Guam.

"The Department of Agriculture," he said, "has been sending pedigreed hogs out here to raise the standard of the pig population of Guam. We place them with native farmers, and they're supposed to let nature take its course and eugenics do its duty. My chief occupation is to see that those farmers don't put those hogs to the wrong purpose, such as eating them at a wedding-feast."

Only a little more than a year after that, my captain with the bitter smile and the wry humor became a prisoner of war in Japanese hands. The Department of Agriculture's pedigreed hogs had been of little use as a defense force.

Wake Island, which I had known before, was little changed, though the Navy was putting in some sort of radio installation on a corner of the island that was roped off from prying eyes. There was a labor camp there, and a few Marines. Those leathernecks and the pick-and-shovel men staged one of the heroic stands of history when the Japs attacked, but they never had a chance.

Midway was better. It looked as if the lagoon were being bombed as we came down to a landing. But it proved to be dynamite charges with which the coral heads were being blasted out to make a harbor for Navy vessels. Steel buildings were going up, and an airfield had been

46 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

constructed. Just the little that was done at Midway saved the island for us. Such a little might have saved us Wake and Guam and perhaps even the Philippines, too.

7. "Defense"

THE NEXT YEAR AND MORE I spent traveling around America, working always on defense, writing the day-by-day story of our preparations for war. It seemed to me that every one knew it was coming, though organizations like America First still struggled against the inevitable. We were caught in a world current. If we hadn't been swept in we would have had to content ourselves with becoming driftwood, going meaninglessly round and round in a stagnant backwater. As it turned out, and perhaps for the best, we didn't have to make the final decision. The Japanese made that for us.

It was a relief to have the election over and to return to some semblance of honesty, some national unity under an accepted leadership whether for good or bad.

England at this time was undergoing the 'blitz.

During those months I did all the usual things that reporters do to get their news. I flew in Army planes over land and sea. I went up in an unarmed blimp to patrol the waters of the Atlantic Coast. And I went down in a submarine in Long Island Sound. I also rode in the rumble-seat of a dive-bomber. I'd better tell about that

48 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

last business; there aren't so many people outside the services who have done the chute-the-chutes in a dive-bomber.

I'd gone up to Buffalo to see the Bell Airacobra, which wasn't yet in assembly-line production. But it was almost there, and already it was the whispered wonder of the day. After watching performance I believed all the whispers. Since then I've seen the Airacobra on several fronts, and it's still my pet for the purpose it was built for—for turning tanks into junk.

Quite by chance while I was in Buffalo I went out to the Curtiss-Wright airport, and there I saw a new dive-bomber just being groomed for Navy acceptance tests. It was a slick-looking job, and it still had its *x* number on the wings. That *x* means experimental, and it also means that only company and Government officials can fly it. So, being neither, I got a flight in it anyway.

It was a lieutenant commander who fixed me up. He was a public relations officer for the Navy then, and he did some abracadabra that changed the rules. I climbed into the rear gunner's compartment, and a mechanic showed me how to strap in. He also showed me a little red switch.

"When you have to bail out," he said, "just push that and the whole roof will fly off your greenhouse."

Then he pulled the transparent plastic roof over my head and it clicked shut. I wished, as we trundled out to the runway, that that mechanic had said "if" I had to bail out, not "when." It sounded so certain.

The dive-bomber took off easily after a very short run, and then it flew almost straight up. There was a feeling of tremendous power and complete freedom. I made a quick survey of my surroundings. I was not uncomfortably housed. The seat in which I was strapped was comfortable

despite my parachute pack. There were a lot of dials directly in front of me, from which I selected the altimeter and the speed indicator. I was in a powered revolving turret, but the revolving mechanism was not in, which didn't displease me at all. Nor was the gun installed, so I had plenty of room.

But I was completely alone. By pulling in my head and bending my body I could look right up through the ship and see the pilot very far away. The rear gunner's post in a dive-bomber is a very lonely one. But you have a lovely view. The plastic greenhouse gives free vision in all directions except straight through the floor.

When we got a little above eight thousand feet the pilot leveled off, and we slogged around in lazy eights. I picked out the field, now a little off to one side, and realized the pilot was getting into position to dive at a very steep angle. I peered up through a forest of wires and tubing, and he looked back at me with raised eyebrows. I waved with what I hoped was nonchalance. He made a porpoise motion with his right hand and then turned back to his business.

The plane nosed over gently, and just as it started down, the engine shouted with full voice. We fell as Lucifer must have fallen when he was caught by the heel and cast from Heaven. It was awful.

But I hadn't made the flight for fun anyway, so I tried to keep on the job. I watched the altimeter and the speed indicator, the hand of the former spinning around backward and that of the latter going up and up and up. My impressions were very scattered. I remember seeing the speed needle go as far as five hundred, and after that it didn't seem to matter. As the altimeter needle flicked past the two-thousand-foot mark, I noticed, and I will say for myself that I laughed when I noticed, that I had

50 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

one foot planted very firmly on the front wall ahead of me. You know, to cushion the shock when we hit the ground.

The pull-out came at about a thousand, I guess, though I wasn't much interested in the instruments by that time. When the pilot pulled back I felt as if some giant had caught me by the back of the head and was grinding me down. I had my arms crossed on a steel frame in front of me and my head was pushed into my forearms so they were bruised. Then, suddenly, the pressure relaxed and we came in to an easy landing.

I unbuckled myself and stepped jauntily out. I thought I was getting away with it until somebody remarked about half an hour later that I didn't look so green now.

There was another interesting plane I rode in during that period, and one that was much more fun. That was a plywood job designed by Martin Jensen, famous race and stunt pilot who is also a top flight aeronautical engineer. That also still had its x, but through friends in the firm of Harry Bruno, pioneer aviation publicist, I wangled a ride.

I drove out to Roosevelt Field one morning with Bett, and Jensen's plane was sitting there as pretty as a light mahogany piano with wings. There were two engines, and the wings were swallow-swift. At about three thousand feet Jensen leaned back in his chair and took his hands off the wheel in front of him. He motioned to the dual controls just in front of my seat.

"You take it," he said.

I don't know why people do that to me. I've had the pilots of two great air transports throw the controls at me in just the same way, one over the Atlantic and the other snaking along above the Brahmaputra in India.

Once in a blimp, too. I don't suppose I'd mind, except for one thing: I don't know how to fly.

But as it turned out I seemingly couldn't go wrong in this plywood plane. After a little gingerly travel in which the plane really ran me rather than vice versa, I gained confidence. At Jensen's suggestion I took the wheel in just two fingers and moved it from one side to the other. The plane danced like a happy bird.

"Let me show you something," Jensen said, and took back the controls.

He pulled down the throttles and brought the plane to stalling speed, too slow to hold itself up. That's the danger point, the moment when you go into a spin, and sometimes you can't get out. You spin right into the ground.

But at the moment of stall this plane just nosed over, slid down like a scenic railway and then straightened out, the speed gained in the drop having given it flying speed again. Soon it went into another dip, and so on all the way down. With very little help at the end the darned thing landed itself. I knew enough about air war to see that this plane might save lives.

That was in the summer of 1941. In the summer of 1943 the British began using Mosquito bombers and fighters made of plywood. Cheap, easy to build, fast, they are the great aërial innovation of the war. But why did we wait for the British to do it? Where is the Jensen plane? That experimental model was no war plane, but it had all the ideas which could have been developed into a war plane. Do we always have to be so slow?

During all this time, too, I traveled around the country visiting defense factories: Chrysler, Ford, General Motors. Slowly I saw our muscles grow. And I went to sea on the brand-new battleship *North Carolina* and witnessed the

52 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

greatest salvo ever fired from any ship. The *North Carolina* stood up under it, too, except for minor casualties like the wardroom ceiling and some steel locker doors that were plucked right off their hinges by the concussion.

We were on our way all right, and about time too. Because at the end of that summer Germany attacked Russia despite their friendship pact, and drove almost to the gates of Moscow. And on December 7th the blow fell at Pearl Harbor.

8. *Africa*

WHEN THE JAPANESE ATTACKED Pearl Harbor, the shock had a certain aftertaste of relief. It was tragic that the war had to come to us in that fashion, but at least we were finally in it. Now we could go to work.

My own first reaction was a selfish one. I wondered if I would have to go to the front, wherever the front might turn out to be, right away. We were going to have a baby any day, and I didn't like the thought of leaving Bett. So while a new phase of the war began which was certain to cost the lives of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of Americans in the flower of their youth, I was more concerned with one little American who was not even born.

Mary Stewart, or Marni as Bett nick-named her, was born eight days after Pearl Harbor. I was told that I would not be sent out yet "for humanitarian reasons." So other reporters went first to Hawaii and later to Iceland, Australia, Java.

But humanitarianism is a short-term quality even in the newspaper business. The war was going badly for us. The Philippines followed the Dutch East Indies into bondage.

54 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Burma was evidently going to be next. India seemed on the time-table for early Japanese attention.

So when Marni was a big girl of two and a half months I was assigned to India. Trouble seemed brewing there fast. Gandhi was acting up. Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India with a British offer of independence—conditional and qualified but still an offer. India was the place to be.

Passport, priorities, injections, all the rest of the preparations took six weeks to complete. When I finally got word that my plane would leave the following evening, and that I was allowed fifteen pounds of baggage, it was April 11th. On the day I left, the Cripps negotiations collapsed. India was ripe for anything.

My Clipper captain was Bill Winston, a veteran of both oceans, a fine story-teller and an amateur magician. No Clipper crossing is ever dull when Bill's the pilot. But as it turned out my trip was not destined to be dull anyway, and Bill had little time to give to parlor tricks.

There were about a dozen passengers, mostly young Pan American mechanics being distributed to the air bases built across Africa. The others were an Iraqi couple returning to Bagdad on some sort of semi-diplomatic papers, a State Department courier with locked and sealed pouches from which he never took his eyes, and another reporter.

The newspaperman was Harry Crockett of the A.P., off on his first foreign assignment. It turned out to be his last, too. He died some nine months later in the wintry waters of the Mediterranean near Malta, victim of an Axis dive-bomber.

I didn't know who he was until after we were in the air, but I'd noticed him in the terminal building because he was so evidently trying to make a cheerful occasion of his parting from a very pretty wife and two attractive

youngsters. Bett and I had said good-by at home: we knew only too well the strain of those nervous airport partings.

Our Clipper didn't stop at Miami, as was the custom then, but flew straight through to Puerto Rico, where I had spent a honeymoon four years before. From the hotel where we had lunch I could look across a little bay to the white beach, wired against barracuda, where Bett and I had spent happy days. Our hosts there were Emmeline and Basil Gallagher, an ace newspaperman who had joined the Steve Hannagan public relations staff and was handling the island's trade and tourist publicity. Red Gallagher was back in New York when I passed through Puerto Rico on the way to India. But he too was to become one of the war's victims. Early in 1943, a captain in the Army, he died in that mysterious Brazilian crash of one of the big planes accompanying President Roosevelt to the meeting with Prime Minister Churchill at Casablanca.

Our run down the Brazilian coast was uneventful, a time of making friends. Harry and the State Department courier, Sam Gross, and I fell into a natural threesome and spent the evenings prowling the back streets of cities like Belem, the port of Para, and Natal.

It is from Natal that the Clippers start across the ocean, and at that point we dropped most of our passengers because we had to take on vital war materials and needed weight. For the ocean hop the only passengers were the Iraqi couple, Harry, Sam, and I.

Just how we rated such priority, any of us except Sam, I don't know. But so it was, and so long as the discrimination was in my favor I didn't question it. That, I suppose, is one of the things you can explain by shucking it off on to "human nature."

If so, I suppose it was also human nature which made me resent another bit of discrimination which was not in my favor. I had been limited to fifteen pounds of baggage. And that was precisely the weight of my portable typewriter. So I didn't have any real baggage: no clean underclothes, no clean shirt, no socks, not even an extra handkerchief. The others were in the same box except that the Iraqi people didn't have typewriters, and it takes a lot of clothes to make up thirty pounds; and except for Sam.

Now Sam is a very nice man. I like him. But because he is a State department courier he had an unlimited baggage allowance. He had big bags, and they were expertly packed with a profusion of clothes. I traveled with Sam for a week, and I never saw him in the same suit twice.

Yet we needed every pound of weight-lifting that plane had, to get war materials across the ocean. We left mechanics behind. And when you come to Sam's baggage; why Sam himself? Why was it necessary to assign a man to carry a couple of leather pouches across the ocean? Suppose there really was something very secret and important in those pouches—instead of the routine junk that probably filled them—even so, why have a special courier? Wouldn't the Pan American Clipper captain be a responsible enough person to guard them against rifling? The ways of bureaucracy are indeed strange.

We were all a little solemn, I think, when we took off at dusk for the flight across the South Atlantic. Sam was a regular shuttle-bug on this run and perhaps felt no more thrill than the crew. I had flown the Pacific four times and the North Atlantic twice, but not since the Axis had become such a threat. Harry and the Iraqi couple had not flown across any ocean ever.

In normal times the Clippers are very luxurious yachts for night flying, with their upper and lower berths of superlative comfort. But with the coming of war, and the need to trim weight to a minimum, the aluminum frames for the berths were left behind.

We were so few, however, that we each could lie out flat on a settee. And there were two blankets apiece. We turned in early, only the crew on the upper deck keeping night vigil.

Some time during the night I was awakened by a feeling of intense oppression, as though a great weight were resting on my chest. I was uncomfortable, and I realized also gradually that I was cold, but I felt a great lethargy, too, and for the time being I made no move.

My brain seemed to be numbed as well as my body, because only slowly was it borne in on me that there was another noise besides the steady drone of the motors. Once noticed it became very sharp. It was like bullets pounding at machine-gun speed against the plane's aluminum skin.

I finally identified this noise as probably due to sleet. And next my mind interpreted the cold as undoubtedly being the result of unusual altitude. I remembered the cold in the *Aotearea* from New Zealand to Australia at 15,000 feet. I recalled the cold during a flight I once made over the Andes at 20,000 feet. It was like that.

Once I had made up my mind that we had gone very high to get over a storm, and were still unable to top the sleet, I wanted to take a look for myself. But altitude puts space between decision and action, and it was only after some delay that I finally raised myself on to one elbow.

The window curtains were still down, as they must be if any lights are showing. But the cabin was dark, so I tugged at one of the curtains and it pulled aside.

58 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

The plane's wing was a mass of yellow flame.

Imagine yourself in such a position. You are between three and four miles above the Atlantic. Your vitality is sapped by altitude. There is a storm. Your plane is enveloped in flame. How would you feel?

That is exactly the way I felt.

And yet, because of lack of oxygen, I did nothing: neither jumped to my feet, nor cried out, nor even took any measure to warn my companions of what was happening. Oxygen is very necessary to the normal functioning of the human machine. I went to sleep. At least, that's the way I tell it: others might suggest that I fainted of plain stark fright.

When I woke again the sun was up, and on the far horizon there was a white line which I knew must be the African beach. The feeling of pressure on my lungs and heart was gone. I could decide to move my hand and move it at once, without stopping to wonder if I really wanted to move it. A glance out of the window showed me, as soon as I had spotted that reassuring beach, that we were down to about 5,000 feet. It also showed me that the plane still had a wing. It wasn't even charred. I decided to say nothing until I had discovered from the others what had gone on, if anything.

Bill Winston came down from the flight deck shortly after we had gathered in the smoking compartment for a morning cigaret. He looked tired, but he grinned.

"Have a good night?" he asked. "You all behaved yourselves, anyway."

It was the Iraqi woman who finally asked the question I think we all wanted to ask.

"Didn't we have a storm?" she asked. "I was very sick."

Bill told us then, and at least it was a relief to know I wasn't falling into the nightmare habit.

During the night we had run head-on into an unusually severe tropical storm.

"It just took the plane right out of my control," Bill said, "and sucked us up to 15,300 feet before I could take over again."

The temperature was down below zero at that altitude, and the sleet sprayed over the plane in waves. At such temperatures, Bill told us, sleet will build up static electricity in a plane. So as we bored through the darkness the crew on the flight deck saw a corona begin to build up like a halo around the ship's nose. Then electric flames began to lick back from the leading edge of the wing as static built up there.

It must have been about then that I woke up and thought we were afire. I would have been even more frightened if I had known what was almost certain to happen to us next. But I enjoyed the bliss of ignorance. Old Cape Codders have a saying, "Know nothing, fear nothing." So I wasn't afraid about what really was likely to happen to us; just about something I thought was happening but which really wasn't.

The crew, of course, had no buffer of ignorance to protect them against the facts of life in the sub-stratosphere. They knew what they could expect when that blazing corona got as big as a harvest moon. We were due to get struck by lightning.

The members of the crew were clear-minded, too. They were breathing oxygen. That sounds a little callous at first, but they were right. They were in storm, and they expected to be struck by lightning any minute. The plane was their responsibility, and we were their responsibility. They had to be ready for split-second decisions and coördinated action. So they whiffed oxygen. But we had neither duties nor responsibilities. In fact, it was better

for us to be half-doped for lack of oxygen. It was a guaranty that we wouldn't get curious and come poking in where we didn't belong. So they let us breathe the thin air unfortified with oxygen and lie half-comatose while men who knew what they were about did a job of work.

As the moment drew near for the bolt of lightning, drawn from the stormy skies by that growing corona, Bill turned on all the lights on the flight deck. That was so they wouldn't be blinded by the flash, as they would be if it came to them in darkness.

They also held one arm in front of their eyes, to shield them against the flash.

But just when the lightning bolt should have hit us we ran suddenly out of the sleet. The corona shrank like a punctured balloon, and the flames dribbled away from the wing. We were out of the storm.

Bill assured us that we would have been in no danger if the bolt had hit us. If a bolt hits a wood and fabric plane, he said, the result is the same splintering crash of explosive destruction as when a tree is hit. But the great metal planes are wired, like a house with lightning rods. So when a bolt does strike, it hits the wing, well away from the cabin, drills a hole the thickness of a pencil through the wing, and runs harmlessly back into the sky from a trailing wire.

"You'd hardly notice anything," Bill assured us, "except a slight smell of burned air."

Still . . .

At the place where we alighted there is a tremendous air base now. But then the Liberian shore at that point was an unbroken line of green jungle right down to the sand. We didn't even go ashore, but transferred to another smaller plane, a Grumman "duck," for a short flight

to Harbel, headquarters of the Firestone rubber plantation.

We had to wait two days there, and we were billeted around on the company officials. Harry and I were lucky enough to become the guest of Charles Vipond, the assistant general manager. We were just installed in his hill-top house, cool because it was raised above the steaming earth on tall stilts, when the general manager came in.

He was a pleasant man with a ruddy face and white hair showing beneath a gray sombrero. He grinned. He was George Seybold, the rubber man I'd met my first night in London just after war broke out. The war had chased him out of the Far East, but he was still growing rubber.

George is a sport, and the first thing he did was remind me that he had thought I was crazy when I'd predicted in 1939 that Roosevelt would run for a third term and be elected.

"Be careful what you tell me this time," he said. "I'd probably believe you now even if you told me something that was crazy."

Harbel—that's one of those names of the Pickfair variety, Har for Harvey Firestone and Bel for his wife—is not by any means typical of Africa, but it is exceedingly pleasant. And lest any big-business baiter rise to suggest that that probably depends whether you are white and rich, or black and poor, I will say that it seemed to me a pleasant place for all.

That is a million-acre plantation, and it employs 20,000 natives. There are two main classes in that country. There are the descendants of former slaves in America, for whom the country was founded under President Monroe. They call themselves Liberians and are the upper governing class. Then there are the folk whose forebears

have always been in Africa. They don't wear shoes, and the Liberians refer to them as natives.

All common labor on the plantation, greatest source of live rubber left to the United Nations after loss of the Indies and Malaya, is composed of natives. Whole villages of them have been transported from the back country, and they live just as they did at home, in windowless conical huts.

Harry and I had a good time inspecting the plantation with George Seybold and Vipond, and we learned a lot about rubber we never knew before.

Rubber trees don't begin to yield latex until they are six years old, so there isn't much use in widespread plantings to meet immediate emergencies such as our present rubber shortage. But Seybold wasn't stopped by a little thing like that. He decided to try double tapping of the trees he had.

Rubber is tapped like this: You make a slanting cut in the bark half-way around the tree about four feet from the ground. That's just about shoulder high to the average native tapping boy. A four-ounce agate cup is hooked into the bark at the lower end of the tap. The wound will bleed for a day, just about filling the cup. The next day, and every day, the tapping boy cuts another thin slice from the lower edge of the tap line to start the flow again. That goes on for three years, by which time the tapping scar is down to a foot from the ground.

Then the boy starts a tap at the four-foot level on the other side of the tree, and for the next three years the first side heals so that it can be tapped again.

Now latex is not sap. If it were sap you could drain a whole tree from one tap. But the tapped latex comes only from the immediate region of the tap. This being known, people had talked for years of increasing output

by having two taps to a tree. But it hadn't been done, for fear that somehow this might weaken the trees, perhaps kill them. Nobody wanted to take the chance.

But George Seybold has won and lost several fortunes by taking chances. And rubber was needed imperatively for the war. He put a big section of the plantation under double tapping. And it worked.

The second tapping zone was started about eight feet from the ground. Each tree had two cups instead of one. And both cups filled every day.

The only people who didn't approve were the tapping boys. They had to carry a ladder with them to service the upper taps. And their bare feet protested against the pressure of the rungs. A boy could take care of two hundred one-tap trees; he can handle less than a hundred double-tapped ones because of the ladder-lugging and the ladder-climbing. But there is no manpower shortage in the West African back country. George and Vipond merely built a few more mud hut villages and blew pay call on the factory whistle.

Reporters always groan at the bromide about their meeting so many interesting people. But of course it's true, or it wouldn't have become a bromide. Take Cooper, the number one boy at Vipond's house, for instance. He was an interesting person.

House servants come in bunches, like bananas, in Africa. There are a cook and a laundry man, a chauffeur, a gardener, a "small boy" to do the dusting and any errands for the other servants, and a number one boy who is the major domo of the establishment.

Vipond's number one boy was named something that sounded vaguely like Kowpah, something like the sneezing noise when you turn on a high-pressure water faucet.

64 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Vipond, always one for efficiency, called him Cooper and let it go at that. Cooper was something of a clown in a quiet way, and an expert at pantomime.

Our last night in Harbel Harry and I had been dinner-guests at George's house, and there had been both excellent food and excellent drinks. When Cooper woke us early in the morning we were aware of a certain inner uncertainty. An unsympathetic soul might have said we had just a touch of hangover, and been about right.

Cooper held in one hand a tray on which reposed two four-ounce glasses containing a brown liquid. With the other hand he pried wide open the lid of one of his enormous brown eyes.

Harry got it first.

"Who said this boy doesn't speak English?" he said. "He's telling us this is an eye-opener."

And he was right. Vipond himself does not drink at all, but he keeps guest whisky in his house. And this was four ounces of straight whisky. Cooper was certainly an interesting person.

Because of Cooper's ninety proof personality, I have a somewhat vague memory of leaving Harbel. We did say good-by and board a plane, and fly away. And then I floated into a strange dream country in which rubber trees solemnly discussed the advisability of double tapping Cooper to see if he wouldn't produce twice as much whisky.

And so I was in no frame of mind to take any particular interest in the British colonel who joined us at the airport which is the junction of lines from England and from America.

Portly of build, beefy of face, bristly of mustache, he was a composite picture of all the British colonels there

have ever been in the Indian Army. The only out-of-character thing about him was that his right knee—he was wearing the tropic uniform of khaki shirt and shorts—was tightly bandaged. His right leg was as uncompromisingly straight as an icicle: you judged from seeing him walk that it might break but it would never bend. His face didn't tell if the leg pained. His face didn't tell anything except that he was a British colonel in the Indian Army.

Even as early as that, Pan American Airways in Africa had stripped their planes to make more space for cargo. Sound-proofing was out, and in place of the luxurious chairs of pre-war days there were only aluminum bucket seats hinged to the walls. Our plane had such a heavy load that even those seats were folded down, and the passengers had to make out as best they could sprawled on the cargo.

It wasn't bad riding that first day over Africa, because the top layer of cargo consisted of big gunny sacks filled with grapefruit. They make a mattress better than many I have slept on. Even the British colonel seemed to make himself comfortable once he got his stiff leg into place.

It was Harry who first saw story material in our colonel. Harry had a gift for seeing under the surface. I think the world lost a great reporter when that German dive-bomber got him in the Mediterranean a few months later. We were having a drink after dinner in Madougeri, Nigeria, when Harry told me: "I'm going to find out what's wrong with that colonel's leg. He's traveling in the wrong direction for a man with a leg like that. I'll bet he's a good story."

Next morning we had grapefruit for breakfast, which aroused our suspicions that we would not ride so easy that day. We were right. The whole load of grapefruit had been for that station. And the next layer of cargo

was cases of twenty-millimeter armor-piercing shells, cases with very sharp corners. Harry gave the colonel a hand, and he joined us just behind the pilot's compartment.

"Beastly warm," said the colonel. "The thermometer at the mess shack said 115 degrees. Must be much hotter than that right here in this tin pot sitting in the sun."

I pointed to glaring red letters on a shell case. "Not to be exposed," the warning shouted in italic and underlined capitals, "to temperature exceeding 130 degrees."

"By Jove," said the colonel. "Not bad, what? Must be just about ready to pop."

• And he reached over and scratched a match on one of the cases to light his pipe. We took off then, and the temperature dropped as we ascended. I had just about decided the shells must have cooled below the exploding point when our colonel concluded his smoke by knocking out the sizzling dottle from his pipe on one of the cases. I am not accustomed to reprimanding British colonels, but I think I would have done so then if Harry hadn't furnished a diversion.

He had apparently been planning his campaign to capture the colonel's story and had decided on his method of attack. It was curious that he used an old trick of American foreign reporters in dealing with reticent British officials: curious because this was his first foreign assignment, and he had had little if any contact with the British. He just had an instinct for the proper approach.

It was as simple as it was effective. The British are always amused by American slang. They're amused, that is, when an American uses it. They don't like to hear another Englishman thus murder the King's English. But when an American gets slangy they are apt to unbend and talk to him, just to keep him at the job of being quaint. That's the trick Harry used on the colonel:

"Listen, Colonel, what's the matter with your gam?"

The colonel pushed out his mustache and drew down his nose so he could sight along it at Harry, and looked very British. Then suddenly he laughed.

"I say, you lads do speak a strange language, don't you?" he said. "What in the world is my gam, and who told you there was anything wrong with it?"

So the ice was broken, and the first thing he knew the colonel was telling us his story.

During the first war the colonel, then a junior officer, was leading a cavalry charge in Palestine when a machine-gun bullet got him in the right knee. It was a nasty wound, and it didn't heal.

"I've had twenty-seven operations on the blasted thing so far," the colonel said matter-of-factly. "It's still an open wound after twenty-five years, and it has to be dressed every day."

Apparently he was afraid then that he had been emotional, or had indulged in self-pity, or committed some other of those crimes which are crimes only to the British. He sought cover in understatement.

"It's been quite a nuisance, really," he said mildly.

But we got him talking again and wormed the rest of the story out of him. He said the doctors had been urging him for years to have the leg off. They told him it ought to come off right up to the hip.

"They say I can't possibly walk on it, the blasted fools," he said. "But I point out to them that I do walk on it, and I can outwalk any one of them."

Of course the colonel could have retired on pension a quarter of a century ago and lived on it ever since. But he scoffed at retirement and remained a fighting officer on India's turbulent northwest frontier. The wound never kept him back of the very front line.

68 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

"It isn't much of a leg," he said, thinking of those doctors with their ready scalpels. "But it's been a lot better than no leg at all."

Just before this war began, at the age of fifty-one, the colonel was retired, whether he liked it or not. He went back to England. He lived in one of those little suburban villas where all Indian colonels spend their last years boring the neighbors with tales of Indian campaigns.

The war began, and he watched its sorry progress with the futile bitterness of a man whose usefulness is passed. He went through the London blitz as a civilian, snarling at the bombs and cursing his perpetual wound.

Then came the need for an officer who knew every inch of India's frontier provinces, who knew the type of fighting that has to be done in those wild hills inhabited by even wilder natives. The records were unanswerable. The colonel was called back to the colors, wound and all.

So here he was, flying back to war high above the spiraling dust devils of the African desert and considering himself the luckiest man on earth.

The Battle of Burma was then at its height, though the time had come when any realist could see it was going to end in British defeat. The British would have to withdraw from Burma into India. There was realization that the Japanese might well try to follow them in an attempt to annex that "brightest jewel in the crown of British empire."

It was to be our colonel's job to stop them, to organize bands of Gurkha mercenaries from Nepal and other hill tribesmen and make the jagged Naga Hills impassable to the Japanese.

"They're splendid soldiers in their own kind of warfare," he told us in speaking of the Gurkhas. "You don't need any heavy equipment for them. You don't need any sup-

ply lines to bring up food and ammunition. They know how to live off the country, and they fight with long curved swords called kukris."

I'd heard about those kukris. It is an unbroken tradition that they must never be taken from the sheath except to draw blood. If a Gurkha draws his kukris and then the enemy makes good his escape, the Gurkha will cut himself before he resheaths his blade.

"It's a marvelous weapon," the colonel told us. "Heavy. And sharp. You can pare your nails, sharpen a pencil, or decapitate a bullock with equal facility."

After our ways parted, the colonel went up into those Naga Hills. It was only after he had gone that I realized I didn't even know his first name. His last name was Wright. I don't know much about the man, but I'll never forget him. Many a soldier has been decorated for carrying a wounded officer from the field of battle so he might live to fight again. My colonel carried a wounded officer, himself, on the unbending back of his iron will for twenty-five years. And when the great call came he delivered himself for duty.

To any defeatist doped by Axis propaganda into believing that Britain is dying, that the Anglo-Saxon race has passed its prime, I present with pride my British colonel of the everlasting wound.

The flight across Africa was uneventful, and we were getting tired with flying. It may sound restful to soar through the air with nothing to do but loll in a plane and look out of the windows. But I have always found it very wearing if you fly all day and every day for more than about a week.

You get pent-up and nervous, keyed to easy laughter or easy anger. There were fortunately no angry exchanges on this trip, no instances of friendship cracking under the

strain of too close companionship. But there was a good example of the easy laughter I mentioned, laughter that normal people would have squelched.

It had to do with the Iraqi couple who had come all the way with us from New York. He was a teacher, and he had been picking up some degrees at Columbia in New York and somewhere in the Middle West. He and his wife had been away from home and their two children for more than two years.

Their name was Al Hashimi, and any name with Al in front of it is quite a name in Iraq. It means you're the very best people. They'd dropped the prefix while they were in America; they thought it would be simpler for Americans just to call them Hashimi. Mrs. Al Hashimi was air-sick every minute of the way, but she never complained. And it was she, on the day we flew to Khartoum, who furnished us our cruel and childish laughter.

There was a box lunch on the plane, with eggs and fruit and even chicken, and we sat on the cargo and feasted well. I was sitting well forward with Al Hashimi, Harry, and the lame colonel. Mrs. Al Hashimi was sitting up amidship and trying to take some nourishment. Between us and her there lay a British soldier who was even more air-sick than she had been: he just closed his eyes and lay in a state of suspended animation.

We finished our lunches, and Mrs. Al Hashimi managed to eat an orange. Then she signaled to her husband that she could eat no more and asked him with her eyebrows if he would like her egg. He nodded and she tossed it.

Now the ladies of Iraq throw no better than the ladies of other lands. That egg followed a parabola that brought it down smack on the agonized face of the air-sick soldier. It broke and spread. It was not a very good egg. The

soldier didn't even open his eyes; he just groaned at this new proof that all was wrong with the world.

Mrs. Al Hashimi was covered with confusion as thickly as the soldier with egg, and her husband shared her mortification. With an idea of helping the poor man he jumped to his feet. The cardboard box from which he had been eating his lunch fell from his lap. A cascade of eggshells, orange peel, and chicken bones poured down onto the soldier's egg-anointed face.

It shouldn't have been funny. It certainly was not funny to the soldier, or to the Al Hashimis. But the rest of us clung to each other and laughed until we ached. That's what too much flying will do to generally nice people.

When we got to Cairo the next day I headed right for Shepheard's Hotel. It is said of both Shepheard's in Cairo and the Raffles in Singapore that if you just sit there long enough every one you know will pass. It's just a Chamber of Commerce boast so far as the Raffles goes, but I've always found friends at Shepheard's and this time was no exception. I'd just got to the top of the terrace steps when I was hailed by name.

It was Chester L. Morrison of the *Chicago Sun*, whom I hadn't seen since we worked together for the A.P. fifteen years before. Mike, for that is his inexplicable nickname, is a top-notch reporter, and I couldn't have found a better man to fill me in on how things were going on the desert.

They weren't going so well, if you can remember how things stood in the spring of 1942. The British Eighth Army had been driven back across Libya for the second time by Marshal Rommel's Africa Corps, and the Axis had pushed well inside Egypt to El Alamein. It looked bad, and there was a good deal of near-panic.

Mike wasn't very pessimistic. He thought things would turn out all right. He expected to leave for India himself

the following day. It still looked as though there was going to be action there. I was apparently stuck for a week, as the British Airways was booked up solid.

But just as we were talking about this Mike got a cable from Chicago telling him to stay in Cairo because the prospects for important action looked better there than in India. Thus some anonymous genius in far-away Chicago kept Mike where he was able to see the Eighth Army come into its own and start the drive that drove the Axis out of Africa. As he had a ticket to India he didn't need and as I needed one I didn't have we just scratched his name from his priority papers and wrote mine in. A little irregular, perhaps, but it worked.

We walked around town before the blackout set in, and I marveled again at the strangest city traffic I know of anywhere. The streets of Cairo are filled with taxis, buses, private cars, military vehicles of all kinds, camels, and innumerable little asses on which ragged Arabs ride. And Egyptian pedestrians plunge into this traffic as if it wasn't there. We saw several knocked down in a stroll of only a few blocks.

"Why in the world," I said, "will they insist on walking straight out in front of an automobile?"

"I've worked out a theory on that," Mike told me. "Now, I'm from America where camels are not a part of daily life. I think camels are highly improbable-looking animals. I don't really believe there is such a thing as a camel, though nowadays I see thousands of them every day. Well, I think that's the way Egyptians, particularly the Arabs here, feel about automobiles. They don't really believe they're true, no matter how many of them they see. So they walk right out in front of them and get bumped."

9. India

I LEFT MY TRAVELING COMPANIONS, Harry and the colonel and the Al Hashimis, behind at Cairo, and two days later I was in Karachi. I was in India. I was not impressed.

Not that it's a bad city; in many ways it's more or less like any big seaport town. But the place is full of camels. Mike Morrison may think camels are improbable beasts. I think they're impossible.

Karachi must be the camel capital of the world. I have lived in Africa, and if I don't know all there is to know about camels, I know all I want to know about them. They are supercilious, unlovely, slothful, and I am sure possessed of very evil minds. Ships of the desert, pooh.

I found the greatest aggregation of second- and third-rate camels in Karachi that I have ever seen. They must have belonged to the depressed classes, the untouchables, of the camel kingdom.

The camels of Karachi are dray animals, dragging carts behind them as they shuffle along the dusty streets with the sound of weak old men in worn-out bedroom slippers.

What got under my skin most was that every one of

74 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

those carts was equipped with four fine automobile tires. Never a retread in sight. Must Bett put our car up in dead storage so that the camels of Karachi shall have tires?

I have never liked camels. They are not safe to stand in front of, because they chew thistles and then cough a tight ball of the thorns at you with the speed of a catapult. They are disastrous to stand behind.

One of these days, when the Axis sun has set, when all such minor wars are done, I am sure that we will have to fight the camels. Ah, that will be a war!

The trains don't run from Karachi to Delhi; they run all the way up to Lahore, where Kipling used to edit a newspaper, and then back down to Delhi. The journey took me twenty-four hours, through the dust desert of the Sind, in a compartment without air conditioning. I never liked Indian trains after that first experience.

But I liked Delhi. I liked the old city with its swarming bazaars, its narrow streets, its feel of being the real India. And in a different way I liked New Delhi, the official suburb of Government buildings, broad streets, pleasant bungalows, and relatively few people sleeping on the sidewalks.

The Government buildings are really something. And when I tell you about them don't take the view that this is all very well because they are the symbol of a bygone day of imperialistic beautiful nonsense. New Delhi is a creature of this century.

There are four main buildings, all built of pink sandstone reminiscent of birthday-cake icing. Two of them are filled with the offices of bureaucracy and are known as the North and the South Block. They are on an eminence.

Between and a little behind them is the mammoth structure known illogically as the Viceroy's "house" or sometimes the Vice-regal "lodge."

This pink palace is so placed that the Viceroy may sit on the broad front steps, presumably in some sort of Vice-throne, and look down a broad avenue of arches as the Princes of the so-called sovereign States parade up on royal elephants to bump their brows in obeisance.

Inside this little pink shack in the East there are marble floors such as I never before saw outside the Vatican, fishponds with playing fountains, a ballroom open to the stars.

All this, mind you, in a country of dire poverty, of hand-to-mouth, day-to-day existence, of recurrent famine.

The fourth Government building, set off to one side at the bottom of the little hill, is the Parliament building. This building seems to say to the Indians, "Here, you can have a little grandeur too, though naturally on a somewhat lower level." It's pink sandstone like the others, one story high, circular in shape, known to the irreverent as the car-barn or the gas-house.

I saw the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, but twice during the six months I spent in India. But I think those meetings are worth recording, because of the unscheduled note of hilarity that marked them both. Linlithgow is not the Harry Lauder type of jovial Scot. He's as dour a Scot as you'd be bumped into by in the whole length of Princes Street in Edinburgh. And yet whatever he does seems to carry with it some unintended laughter, though perhaps only to such disrespectful minds as mine.

Journalistic new arrivals in Delhi are accorded either

a Vice-regal "audience," meaning an off-the-record interview, or are invited to lunch. I was invited to lunch.

Some ten of us gathered in one of the small reception rooms. It was small only in that it was smaller than Madison Square Garden. Preston Grover of the A.P. and I were the Americans. Our nearest of kin was Lady Auchinleck, a Western Hemisphere girl who prefers to be known as "Sergeant Auchinleck." She's the wife of the justly famous "Auk" of the Western Desert. Then there was a vice-regal daughter, several members of the Vice-regal household, and a very public-school and Oxford aide who acted as master of ceremonies. Such aides wear silver stars as insignia of rank instead of the usual British Army diamond-shaped "pip." So, though this aide was only a captain, and therefore a three pipper, he wore the same shoulder insignia as a lieutenant general in the United States Army. There were no Indians at the luncheon.

The resplendent aide, who had the scrubbed pink look of a choir-boy just leaving home for church, saw to it that we had cigarets and cocktails of a sort, which we took standing. But then there was apparently an off-stage prompting audible only to an aide's ears. Our aide quickly placed us in a semi-circle. "Here, you stand there, you there, you there." A quick firm hand guiding the elbows of the uncertain.

Double doors swung open. Enter the Viceroy. More than six feet tall. Slender. Gray-haired. Serious of mien. His Excellency the Viceroy of India, the Marquis of Linlithgow. Behind him trotted his wife, the plump and amiable Marchioness.

We were greeted, one by one, with more sense of ceremony than I had felt since, years before, I knelt among a crowd of pilgrims at a Papal audience in the

Vatican. It would not have seemed incongruous to me if Linlithgow had extended his hand to let me kiss his ring.

As soon as our existence was made official by the Viceroy's recognition of our presence, he turned and led the way into the dining-room. One of the lodge's small dining-rooms: about the size of a bowling alley.

The Viceroy sat half-way down the table, as is the British custom, instead of at the head as we do when we are host. And I was on his right. This gave me a good chance to study him at close range, and I discovered an odd resemblance. Lord Linlithgow, like President Roosevelt, once contracted infantile paralysis. And at that luncheon it seemed to me that he has a great resemblance to our President. He doesn't "look like him." I don't mean that kind of resemblance. It's some bone structure, or perhaps only a way of holding the head, so that when you see the one you think of the other.

The Viceroy asked me if I would have lemon "squash" or beer, and I made the mistake of asking for beer. It was served in a goblet with two large cubes of ice floating in it.

Talk at the luncheon was what is generally known as desultory. That is, no one spoke unless he was spoken to. And then he just said yes. When we moved back into the reception room the three-starred aide told each one of us with whom to sit. I was assigned to the Marchioness, and sat beside her on a hard sofa.

The Marchioness is what is often called a "motherly woman." In other words, a pleasant, cheerful, understanding sort whom every one likes and who seems to like every one. Our conversation was entirely of the how-do-you-like-India type, but easy and relaxing. I asked her some question about India, and she replied:

78 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

"Why, it was only the other day I asked H.E. about that and he told me—"

Just at that moment the Viceroy stood up, so the Marchioness stopped in mid-sentence and fell in behind him. They made the circuit of the room, shaking hands silently, and then vanished through the double doors, which closed magically behind them.

The aide stood among us, looking very blank indeed, and we decided that this was our cue to leave. Our first movement toward the corridor was reflected in a smile of happy relief on the aide's face.

It wasn't until Grover and I were jogging back to our hotel in one of those two-wheeled, backward-riding pony carts called tongas that I realized who it was that the Marchioness had referred to as H.E. It was her husband. The Viceroy. H.E. for His Excellency.

It was more than two months before I saw the Viceroy again. And then only to shake hands. Not even a good handshake. Lord Linlithgow has acquired a habit common among public figures who must often endure the boredom of "reception lines." Such people pick up a way of simultaneously shaking hands and hauling you past them to the next person. "Passing you on" is, I believe, the phrase. It's like being given the bum's rush by a bouncer in morning coat and striped pants.

But the occasion of my second meeting with the Viceroy was one for the book. The date's enough to give you an idea. It was the Fourth of July.

Colonel Louis Johnson, whom President Roosevelt had sent over to help out or something during the Cripps negotiations, had gone back home some time before. George Merrill, the former Consul General from Calcutta, who had come up to lend Johnson a hand, was left in

Delhi to hold the fort—or the bag, according to how you cared to look at it. He couldn't quite decide just what his position was after Johnson left. He called himself First Secretary to the Personal Representative of the President of the United States. As there was no longer any personal representative of Mr. Roosevelt in the country, Merrill's position had a certain Alice-in-Wonderland quality, but still he was the nearest thing there was to a diplomatic representative in town.

Late in June one of the silver-starred aides called him up from the "lodge" with a small problem.

"The Viceroy would like to know," he said, "whether Independence Day is being celebrated this year on July fourth or at some other date."

Apparently Mr. Roosevelt's cavalier treatment of Thanksgiving had spread word throughout the world that the whole calendar of American holidays had been shaken up like dice in a box.

When Merrill assured the aide that the Fourth of July was still celebrated on July fourth, the aide then said that the Viceroy had considered the matter of having a little party on that date. Something to bring the Americans and British in India closer together. The Indians, too, of course. Oh, naturally. And what did Mr. Merrill think of the notion?

Merrill said he thought it ought to work out fine. He little knew.

And so, in due course, invitations went out from the Viceroy's "house." Great square cards with a gold crest at the top. Below that was printing. Yes, printing, not engraving. Remember that this was wartime. Austerity, you know. Even in the pink palace of the Viceroy, with its army of servants, of gardeners, of guards. The main

80 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

part of the invitation, with a blank line for the invitee, read:

"The Viceroy and Marchioness of Linlithgow request the pleasure of Mr. Blank's company at a reception on Saturday, the 4th July 1942 at 8-0 o'clock."

In the lower left-hand corner were the printed instructions:

Dress

Mily.—Bush shirts and trousers

Civil.—Summer suits or Dinner Jackets
or Indian dress

NO DECORATIONS

That set the tone. Informal but not too informal. Bush jackets, yes, but don't get the idea you can wander into the Viceroy's house in a pair of shorts, old fellow. The "no decorations" warning was a genuine gesture to put the Americans at their ease. Not too many Americans in India at that time had any decorations.

Well, came the Fourth of July. Not that it came without certain advance fanfare. The advisers to the Viceroy might have known that the Indian press would have a little fun with the idea of the British government of India celebrating the independence of America.

The editor of the *National Call* of Delhi, which has an English edition, is a fellow named J. N. Sahni, who studied journalism in New York and worked as a reporter for some time in Detroit. His satirical column is frequently a delight. He failed to receive, but did see, one of the invitations. He wrote his July Fourth column on the subject. He suggested that to make it perfect Lord Linlithgow should go to his party in the costume of General Cornwallis.

A great many people were invited to that party. They were formed into a queue about twenty abreast, and they reached from the ground floor all the way up a curv-

ing marble staircase and along a couple of corridors. They stood in that queue, not moving, for more than half an hour, before the reception line formed to greet the guests. I think it was the human steam pent up during that period of waiting that exploded into the subsequent events.

From the reception line, where the Viceroy snapped each guest on to the Marchioness with the precision of a circus trapeze-act "passer," one moved into a broad corridor lined with tables. There were assorted viands on these tables, and sparkling glasses were placed on them in large symmetrical triangles. At the bottom of each glass was a vaudeville Scotchman's idea of a drink of whisky, for a friend.

Now this was July in India. Evening, to be sure, but the temperature even then is but little under one hundred degrees. And these people had been squeezed up in a tight line, unmoving, for a long time. They were very hot. They were suddenly confronted with something cold, and stimulating, to drink.

It is impossible to record for history who thought of it first. But very soon almost every one I could see was pouring three of those tiny whiskies into one glass and drinking same with a shot of soda just to show there were no hard feelings.

I think the Viceroy may have seen how things were going, because he and the Marchioness retired very shortly and left the guests to their own devices. Some of the devices were what in certain circles might be called cute. In others, something else.

There was dancing in a marble hall open to the stars. There were not enough girls to go around for those who wished to dance. And barefoot servants did continue to paint the bottom of all those glasses with whisky. So pretty

82 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

soon some of the younger guests began disappearing quietly, ostensibly to "get some air." They returned with dancing partners.

I can't give an eye-witness account of how it all ended. My years, I fear, are catching up on me. Sometimes nowadays, struggle against it as I will, a certain drowsiness obsesses me along toward four o'clock in the morning. That is a weakness, however, which was apparently not shared by many others at that Vice-regal function.

I well remember seeing, as I left, a large group composed of Americans and Britishers and Indians. They were standing in a ring in the main ballroom, and their arms were about each others' shoulders. Their heads were raised to the moon, like baying dogs, and they were singing, with perfect abandon and not without a certain harmony, the strains of "Sweet Adeline."

I hadn't been in India more than about two minutes before I discovered there was an "Anglo-American problem." It wasn't really a discovery, because whenever and wherever you find a good many Englishmen and a good many Americans in the same place, you are sure to find such a problem.

I feel that I can speak thus bluntly about this matter because I think I know the real reason for it. And if I'm right, it's nothing to get excited about.

There's no use playing ostrich about the bald fact that when Americans and English get together there is almost sure to be friction, running all the way from raised eyebrows to a belt in the nose. Just before I got to India there was a perfect case of the latter type of hands across the seas, in fists.

Some of our airmen, recently out of the death struggle in the Indies, and various members of the RAF from the

same theater were making a mild evening of it. In a hotel room where the party wound up, one of the young Englishmen decided to ask a question which had seemingly been preying on his mind.

"When, if I may ask," he inquired, "are you Americans going to begin to fight?"

There was a moment of very complete silence, and then one of the Americans replied in a tight voice:

"What's the matter with right now?"

He accompanied his remark with a haymaker picked right off the matting, and the fun was on.

That's instance number one. Here's another, that happened some time after I had arrived in Delhi. Some of the people who were worried about signs of discord between the English and Americans arranged to have a few social get-togethers for the troops at one of the canteens. Not for officers, this effort, but for what the British call "other ranks" and what we call enlisted men.

Well, the first one really went off fine. The English boys and the American boys drank beer together and did a little boasting back and forth and laughed at each other's peculiar language, and it was just wonderful. There was a man to play the piano for them, too. And to top the evening off he played the national anthems. "The Star-Spangled Banner" ran its course with all hands standing to attention. And then they played "God Save the King."

All would have gone well except for one boy from the fertile fields of our Middle West who didn't know about "God Save the King." He thought it was a darn pretty piece called "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," and he'd been especially fond of it in a version he'd heard back home by some orchestra that swung it. So in all innocence he bellowed out:

84 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

"Swing it."

Those English boys apparently didn't know about swing. But it sounded like an insult to them. And they'd stood to attention for that "Star-Spangled Banner" thing. So each English soldier chose an American soldier and started to wipe out the imagined stain on the British escutcheon, using the American's face for the escutcheon.

During the following week a labor battalion rebuilt the canteen; put the roof back on and everything.

Well, that gives you an idea. There was enough of it in India, though by no means all of it so violent, that the people who are paid to think put a lot of thought on the matter. The American command took it out largely in official commands to the soldiery to make friends with their British brothers, pointing out that the Axis would like nothing better than to see disunity among us.

The British went further. They hired Sir Evelyn Wrench, founder of the English Speaking Union and life-long laborer for better Anglo-American relations. Sir Evelyn is a charming man. In fact, I think the only more charming person I know is Lady Wrench. But I am afraid they must have had a very unhappy stay in Delhi.

As one means of improving international relations, Sir Evelyn arranged a series of interviews for the foreign press with Indian leaders. They were almost uniformly unsuccessful. Partly this was Sir Evelyn's fault; I think he did try to load the dice a little.

He never served us Gandhi or Nehru or any of the younger Congress Party firebrands. He didn't bring us Jinnah, the implacable foe of the Congress and leader of India's Muslim Separatist party. He brought us Indians who had accepted Government jobs, or one of the Maharajas who would lose all his wealth and position except for Britain's rule.

Yet, even so, it didn't work out according to plan. I recall particularly the case of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, leader of India's eighty million Hindu untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar had accepted a cabinet portfolio, but even so he remained an independent and embittered man.

You can see the meeting was almost foredoomed to failure when I tell you that it was held in a reception room of Delhi's finest hotel. Dr. Ambedkar, though a cultured gentleman, couldn't have registered at that hotel, because he was by birth an untouchable. He couldn't even have entered it except that Sir Evelyn, with his Governmental power, had ordered that he be admitted. I don't think he liked being there under such circumstances.

Everything went smoothly enough until Dr. Ambedkar began telling us something of his youth. He was an unusually intelligent child, and mission workers who were interested in him arranged for him to attend a school. He did so, for one day. And then the little caste Hindus went home and told their parents they were obliged to sit in the same classroom with an untouchable. There was hell to pay.

So the school built a little box outside one of the classroom windows. And every day this little boy would come to school, climb a ladder to his box, and lean an ear against the netting which protected the other pupils from contamination. So he learned the first lessons of an education which later took him to Columbia University and made him one of the ablest lawyers in India.

That story, told with a dry bitterness which was more effective than any ranting, quite evidently impressed the reporters deeply. Sir Evelyn wanted to make sure they didn't get a wrong impression.

"That was, of course," he asked our guest, "an Indian school?"

Dr. Ambedkar looked at him with eyes which suggested he was seeing nothing in that overstuffed room, that he was seeing only a little boy perched in a cage-like box outside a schoolroom, a pariah. He has full lips, and they seemed to writhe a little as he replied distinctly:

"It was a British school."

So much for the fact of Anglo-American discord, and examples thereof. Now for my theory, which I have tested on many fronts. I believe that such discord is as inevitable as brotherly or sisterly bickering within a family circle. What children rub each other the wrong way most? Surely it is brothers and sisters. They are so much alike that little differences grate. Yet surely, despite this bickering, they love each other more deeply than children who "get on well" together but are not related. This bickering is a proof, rather than a disproof, of their love. And I believe this is equally true of British and Americans. I refuse to get excited about it. I would as soon think the Jones family is breaking up and going to pot because Bobby Jones smacked his brother Ronald with a wet bathing-suit. Let any neighbor boy move in on Ronald and see whose side Bobby is fighting on. For all our disagreements, spats, and makings-up since silly George the Third was king to all of us, we are at heart children of the same forefathers. It's all "in the family," and it doesn't mean a thing.

It was very hot in Delhi the first month I was there. It hit 120 in the shade most every day, and it didn't go down much at night. You slept naked under a fan, the big wooden kind they used to have in butcher stores at home when I was a kid. Even so you'd have to turn the mattress

during the night or it was like sleeping on a piece of cold milk toast. And the fan gave you stomach cramps.

There wasn't much news, either, so I began looking around for some excuse to get out of Delhi. I found it in Assam. The evacuation from Burma was in full swing. By the time I got to India it was already too late to get into Burma. But soldiers and civilians were coming out of Burma as best they could. And they were coming out into Assam. So I went to Assam.

It's a pleasant ride, that, and gets progressively pleasanter as you leave behind the dusty plains and fly above country that is green. The Brahmaputra lies below you, the lazy sort of broad and shallow river that alligators love. And then, after a few hours, you come to the country of the tea gardens, and your sun-baked eyes are soothed as though a poultice had been placed upon them.

I had never seen tea growing, and I had to be told it was tea. It looks like a checker-board from the air, with all the squares of the same color, outlined in black. That is because the tea plants are clipped with flat tops, squared off to permit just enough room for a picker to move between the plants.

It is impossible even now to disclose what place I landed at in Assam. It was then and still is the jumping-off place for China. It is very secret, except, I suspect, from the Japanese.

They were taking photographs of it even then. Just as we arrived there was an alert, and a speck of light flickered in the sun very high above us. I looked around for a slit trench, but when I found one and saw it was half-full of rain water I decided to be brave. A crew chief of the old army, a sergeant with a right cheek pouched like a kangaroo's stomach from years of tobacco chewing, laughed at me.

88 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

"Might just as well stay here and get your picture took," he said. "They're just building up their album."

Bob Layher of the A.V.G., who was the one-man fighter force at that field, went up and scared the Jap photo plane home.

I had thought of going on into China, just for the ride, but weather over those mountains was even worse than usual and I didn't get a chance. So I filled in the days with short flights, hunting for lost fliers who'd had to bail out, and slipping over Burma to look for General Joseph Stilwell.

Uncle Joe Stilwell was being something of a problem right then. Uncle Joe is always something of a problem. He's a stubborn man, only about as big as a pencil, but those boys who twist iron bars out of shape at the county fair couldn't even bend Uncle Joe. Not when he's decided what's right for him to do.

One American plane had spotted him as he was bringing his American staff and his Chinese soldiers and his Burmese girl nurses through the jungle, and it had landed for a pow-wow. Uncle Joe had been offered a lift out. Uncle Joe had told those people who wanted him to leave his gang to go to hell. Uncle Joe brought his gang out, walking at the head of the column, starving when they starved. Uncle Joe is a general.

Well, we went over Burma looking for the Stilwell party, to drop food, and we thought we found them. There was a column fording a stream that had a big sandbar in the middle. We dropped a note, weighted, and with a big streamer on it to attract attention. It said if they were the Stilwell group and wanted food to mark a cross on the sandbar. Boy, that cross was carved in the sand in nothing flat. I asked Stilwell later how they'd liked that food.

"We never got any food from the air," he said. "You must have been feeding the Japs that were on our tail."

Meanwhile there was a tragic evacuation by air going on from Burma. American, British, and Chinese transports were making daily trips to get out as many sick and wounded, as many women and children, as possible.

They all worked out of the field I was staying at, American and British army transports, civilian planes of the China National Aviation Corporation, a former subsidiary of Pan American Airways. The Burma terminus was just across the Naga Hills at Myitkyina, which is pronounced Mitchenaw. It was pretty rough going.

It was of course the same for all refugee planes, but I happen to know only about the American army transports, so I'll tell about that. Every time a plane landed to take on a load there would be hundreds of refugees on the field. And a lot of them hadn't heard about women and children first, or at least didn't think it was a good idea.

On one of our planes I know about, and I suppose it was about the same on all of them, it was routine for that tough old-time crew chief I spoke of to stand on the wing with a long bamboo pole and mow down obstreperous would-be travelers.

The sick and wounded went in first, then children and women, with the pregnant ones given preference. After that if there was any more room it was first come first served. But there generally wasn't any after that.

One frightened gentleman tried to establish his priority rights with a pearl-handled pistol. But some one administered a sleeping draught composed entirely of knuckles.

It's a rough journey through the mountain pass over those tattered hills between Burma and India. It would be uncomfortable in one of those DC-3's with all the seats in and only the normal twenty-one passengers. But the seats

90 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

had been taken out of those planes, and on at least one trip I know of there were seventy-two passengers in one plane. Things happened on those flights. People died. People were born. But thousands of people were saved. It was a tremendous undertaking, beautifully carried out. It was too bad it had to end in needless tragedy.

The C.N.A.C. I spoke of is one of the greatest air outfits in the world. It's helped hold China together during six years of war, giving the Generalissimo a communication system vital to his organization. Many of the pilots are still Americans. Many are Chinese. At least most if not all of the radio operators are Chinese. C.N.A.C. has the best network of radio stations in that part of the world.

There was a C.N.A.C. radio station at Myitkyina. There was another at the Assam field where I was staying. The evacuation planes moved on information passed between those stations. And one morning the C.N.A.C. operator at my field said there was something wrong at Myitkyina. The station there was working all right. He got the usual signal that all was clear and to send the refugee planes on over. But he didn't quite like the Myitkyina operator's "fist." There was something wrong.

He said he thought what was wrong was that the Japs had occupied the field and that a Jap operator was working the radio station. He thought it was a trap.

The C.N.A.C. pilots said that hunch was good enough for them. And the American Army boys agreed. But either it was impossible to get the RAF information in time, or else they couldn't believe the Chinese operator was right. Anyway, they sent over two transports that day.

Everything seemed normal from the air at Myitkyina. The refugees were waiting on the field as always. The transports landed, loaded, and prepared to take off. And then out of the high blue the Zeros came down, machine-

guns chattering. It was the sort of sitting-bird mass slaughter the Japanese seem to enjoy. That was the end of the air evacuation from Burma.

This unnamable village of mine in Assam is a primitive sort of place. Not even a village, really. Just a huddle of huts. A shanty serving as station for the narrow-gage railroad. Several pleasant bungalows which had belonged to tea-garden planters and their foremen. And the airport.

The tea was going untended. The tea planters of Assam are Scotsmen. I don't suppose there's any rule about it; they just are. And they are very fine men. If you aren't a pretty strong character you don't make out as a tea planter in Assam.

Here's one thing about it. You sign on at home to go out and manage a tea garden in Assam. Your contract says you will work there for five years, and you will not marry during that time. After that you sign another five-year contract, and that also says you will not marry during that time. When you sign your third contract you can get married and take your wife to Assam with you.

Ten years is a long time for a young man to live in a far country without any of the distractions and enjoyments of civilized life. Temptation may be a whisper the first year, but it's a bellow before you're done. How easy to seek solace in the bottle, or to take into your house the prettiest girl from the tea garden!

But the planters who do either one of those things don't last. The ones who last are strong men, good men. That's why the tea gardens of Assam were going to hell when I was there. Because the good men who ran them were fighting the war in the best way they could.

They sent all their pickers to work on the airport. And then they themselves moved out into the jungles of the

92 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Naga Hills to establish and operate relief stations for the refugees who were struggling on foot out of the Burma hell.

There has been a great deal written about those refugee routes from Burma. The Indian papers were vitriolic about the situation all the time I was there. Gandhi once delivered me a full hour's tirade on the subject. Much of what they said was true.

There was one road out of Burma for the whites and another for the "blacks," as the Indians chose to call themselves in discussions of the matter. There were a "white route" and a "black route." Conditions were at times very bad even on the white route. They were uniformly terrible on the black one, where starvation, malaria, and cholera stalked the jungle paths with the poor refugees,

But I knew some of those Scots planters running relief stations on the white route, and I know they would have been glad to succor all, regardless of color or creed. But there were difficulties.

The Indians charged that it was racial discrimination. But the British said it had been impossible to have hostels and kitchens for all, because the Indians would not conform to any over-all menu even in that emergency. The Hindus wouldn't eat with the Mohammedans, and vice versa. The Brahmins wouldn't even eat with the British. The Mohammedans were offended by pork, even when served to others. The Hindus disapprove of eating beef.

The Scots planters finally said, in effect: Look, we can't possibly cater to a thousand separate dietary laws and preferences. We will serve what we are able to get and any who want can have it.

So the Indians preferred to travel the "black" route, preparing their own meals the way they wanted them.

Only there was seldom the material to prepare them with. Hundreds of people died who should not have died, but I don't think you can chalk that one up against the British.

I lived at that station in a very pleasant bungalow which had been an Indian foreman's home when the plantation was in operation. He and his little family must have been comfortable there, because some fifty of us lived there, dormitory fashion, and were still comfortable.

The day before I left, the officers with whom I had been living moved to more palatial quarters, the former home of the planter himself, and the enlisted men moved into our bungalow. We moved out in the evening, and the enlisted men were to move in the next day.

An American artillery major who was in India on some sort of roving reconnaissance mission that he frankly didn't understand himself had just arrived when the order to move came in. He also was leaving for Delhi in the morning, and he didn't want to move. He requested, and obtained, permission to sleep in the otherwise deserted bungalow for the night. But he was warned that it would be up to him to get to the plane on time, or he'd be left behind.

That was all right with him. He had his Mohammedan bearer with him, and he gave careful instructions that he was to be awakened at four o'clock. He told me the next day, while we were flying to Delhi, what happened.

He said he was awakened by some one shaking his shoulder. In the darkness a voice asked what time it was. He looked at his luminous wrist-watch and said it was one-thirty.

"All right," said his bearer, "go back to sleep."

The major said he was so sleepy he didn't get what was

94 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

going on and did go back to sleep, only to be awakened about an hour later.

"What time is it, Master?" said the bearer.

"Two thirty-eight," said the major.

"Go back to sleep, Master," said the bearer. "Not time to get up yet."

The major was awakened so at three and at three forty-five and again very close to four.

"What could I do?" said the major. "If I let him take my watch he probably would have gone over the hill and traded it for a harem. If I didn't let him take it he had no way to tell time. I suppose actually I should have sat up all night and let him sleep till I waked him up right on the dot."

When we left Assam that day we took with us a story we had to keep to ourselves for almost a year. It was the story of the Doolittle air raid on Tokyo.

While I was staying at that Assam airfield, the Doolittle fliers began coming in from China. They'd wait there a day or so for a plane to take them on, and quite naturally they couldn't all keep their secret. I don't know whether any of the officers talked. I didn't hear any. But some of the enlisted personnel did, and that was inevitable regardless of what secrecy had been enjoined on them.

Those men had been through a very trying adventure. They had carried it off despite the fact that all their careful plans had been upset by chance. Of course they talked when they got back to a field like ours, where there were shelter and good food and companions of their own kind. So the story came out.

Those first Tokyo raiders who came out of China knew that some of their number had been captured, but they

never considered the possibility that they would be mistreated, let alone murdered as we now know they were.

If the subject had come up we could have told them something of such possibilities. Refugees were coming out of Burma at that time with terrible tales of prisoners of war being tied in bundles, saturated with gasoline, and set on fire. Others were lined up and bayoneted.

The beat-Hitler-first program is all right if it isn't carried on with such singleness of purpose that our enemy of the East is allowed to fasten an unbreakable grip on the Pacific. If that should happen you can give up all hope of freedom in the world.

My first few weeks in Delhi had done little to make me believe that anything serious was being undertaken in a military way to avert invasion of India. We had nothing there but a little air force, with a growing foundation for a big one. The British had some ground troops but not nearly enough.

And the whole spirit of the place was Singapore all over again. Delhi was very crowded, and it was gay with drinking and dancing. Our boys up in Assam, living in primitive quarters and really working at the war, had a word for what they thought of the Delhi headquarters army. They called it (at least this is the most printable paraphrase I can think of) "kissing the cat."

"Here we are working twenty hours a day and risking our necks," they'd say, "and those so-and-so's back in Delhi just sit around kissing the cat."

I suppose it meant just doing absolutely nothing constructive. And if that's what it meant, it was pretty apt. There was little being done.

The British, in fact, gave the impression that they believed affairs would soon return to normal in India. So far as I could find out, they did nothing at all to relieve the

congestion which was certain to increase if even the threat of invasion continued.

The Americans did at least plan for a lengthy occupation. They built their own city for the American troops to live in. For a mile along Queensway in New Delhi they erected white stucco barracks, mess halls, a hospital, office buildings, and officers' quarters, which before I left were occupied by more than five thousand men.

When General Stilwell came out and talked as no one had talked in India before, we felt that all our fears were confirmed. We felt pretty certain at that time, and I still believe we were right, that if Japan had wanted to follow up the conquest of Burma with invasion of India it could have taken the country in a week. There was little material defense; there seemed to us to be absolutely no spirit of defense. Though Malaya and Burma had both been lost, the British Colonial mentality couldn't encompass the possibility that India might also be taken.

We saw Stilwell the day he arrived in Delhi, a man embittered and angry. Jaundice may have affected his disposition, as it had colored the tightly drawn skin of his face, but I don't think so. He was just plain mad.

"We got run out of Burma," he said. "We were badly beaten. It is very embarrassing."

We had dinner with him that night at the luxurious Cecil Hotel in Old Delhi and afterwards sat in the moonlight by the outdoor swimming-pool and listened to a story that seemed incredible as a nightmare.

Most of what Uncle Joe told us was "off the record," but I talked during the next few days to many Americans, English, and Chinese, all of whom had been "run out" of Burma. Here is a thumbnail sketch of that shameful episode in the war as I pieced it together from them. None of this is attributable to General Stilwell.

The British Army in Burma had no air power. It had a great deal of heavy equipment, from tanks down, none of which could be used in that sort of country. They had fine soldiers but nothing for them to fight with. From the first day the order was "Retreat," and it was never altered.

The Chinese under Stilwell were held at the border until it was too late for them to help. And they also had little with which to help. They, too, had fine soldiers but no air. Their orders also were perforce to retreat, and their officers were generally well in the lead of that movement. Stilwell is a front-line general, but I gathered he seldom saw any of his Chinese generals there unless he had taken them with him.

There was never any real face-to-face warfare in Burma. When there was fighting it was because the Japs had infiltrated through the Allied lines and attacked from the rear. For days at a time the retreat continued without the Allies knowing where the Japs were. They had no reconnaissance.

There is a story that Stilwell and Alexander at one point sent an urgent plea to India for just one plane, any old plane, that could do some scouting and let them know where the enemy was. That plane, according to the story told me, never came, though there were plenty in India and nothing much for them to do. In a way, if this story can be credited, Burma was lost for lack of one airplane. It sounds crazy, but I was in India that summer, and it doesn't sound any crazier to me than lots of other things.

British officialdom was shocked at Stilwell's blunt press conference. They arranged one with General Alexander. And that turned out to be an even worse indictment of British unpreparedness.

Alexander said something about the Burma campaign not being a fair showing of comparative British and Japanese fighting ability because the British Army in Burma was "the wrong kind of army" to have in Burma. He said an armored force was no good for that terrain, and that's what the British had.

Several reporters asked how it happened to be there if it was the wrong kind. And Alexander said it was a sort of taxpayers' army, something to quiet the clamor at home.

The people at home, he said, had early sensed the danger in Burma, and there had been insistent demands for British strength there. Then Alexander reminded us that before the war it was difficult to get appropriations for the army. But every one had been so sold on the idea of panzer warfare that money could be obtained for that type of equipment. So when the need came for an army in Burma, all that could be spared was armored force. And that was sent, to appease the taxpayers, even though it was foredoomed to failure.

Stilwell had told us that Burma could be taken back with properly equipped troops, if they had sufficient air power. He had said it must be taken back, to reopen the road to China.

I asked Alexander if he agreed with Stilwell. He agreed, but not as to the reason it should be taken back.

"Of course we must take it back," he said. "It's part of the British Empire."

Delhi was dull a great part of the time while I was in India, and I traveled as much as I could in search of news. But I was always glad to get back to Delhi, because that was the only place we were allowed to broadcast from. And there is a satisfaction in broadcasting, in talking direct

to the folks at home, that you never get from filing a news despatch at a telegraph office.

Broadcasting in India was decidedly of the primitive type. The big station is at Bombay, but we weren't allowed to use that because there were no radio censors on duty there. The station at Delhi was a little one, a whisper on the air waves of the world.

My first broadcast from India is inevitably connected in my mind with Rustam. Rustam was my bearer. When I arrived in India and found that every one had a native servant, I decided I would be the exception. But I soon gave in. The hotels in India are run on the supposition that every guest will have his own servant. If you haven't one, your room isn't swept, your bed isn't made, and all your belongings are stolen. So I let it be known I was in the market for a bearer.

Rustam came to me for the job.

He was a mild little man who looked clean although he was wearing a very dirty and ragged suit. I didn't know it then, but bearers always apply for a job in such clothes. Then the employer buys him a couple of new suits. I fell for it. I hired Rustam and bought him clothes. He was to receive fifteen dollars a month.

Two days later he came to me and said that he was getting married and could he have the following day off? The next day was the day of my first broadcast, and I had to be at the studio at a quarter of five in the morning.

I told Rustam he could have the day off from five o'clock on, but if he didn't wake me at four-thirty his wife would be marrying a member of the unemployed. We left it at that, and Rustam kept the bargain. He woke me at four-thirty, with tea and mangoes, and he had a taxi waiting downstairs.

I picked up Bob Barlow, the OWI man who ran the

100 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

station for such early broadcasts, and we drove to the studio. People who know only the magnificent broadcasting stations of America would be completely taken aback at the little bungalow that serves the purpose of a radio station in Delhi.

Bob and I woke up the night watchman and got in. He turned on lights, pulled switches, and pushed buttons. Thus we tied ourselves in with the vast network of voices blanketing the world. Our little station could only talk as far as Chungking, where a bigger station picked up the failing voice of India and injected it with strength to jump the Pacific to San Francisco. Because of this we had to give time checks to Chungking in advance, so all our watches would be synchronized.

These time signals were given with a big copper gong the size of a cartwheel, suspended by the microphone. Bob called the watchman and asked where the stick for hitting the gong was. It was a thing such as you hit a base drum with and should have been hanging by the gong. The watchman conducted a search and presently returned.

"Can't find, Master," he said, "but this do."

And he held out a long-handled wooden hairbrush. We had no time to argue. Bob pushed a button and talked.

"Hello, Chungking. This is Delhi. When you hear the gong it will be exactly four forty-nine thirty. At exactly four-fifty W. W. Chaplin will begin broadcasting to America."

Then Bob hauled off and smacked the gong with the back of the hairbrush. So was I introduced to my first American audience from India.

Broadcasting got better later. The N.B.C. arranged with All-India Radio for relay through Bombay instead

of Chungking, and the Bombay station could toss it all the way to New York.

Frances Muir was the regular N.B.C. reporter in India, and a good one, so I broadcast only when she was away from Dehli on a trip. She traveled quite a lot, though, with her author-husband Peter, acquiring a more complete knowledge of India than almost any other Americans there at that time, so I did get numerous opportunities. But never was there a broadcast quite like the hairbrush serenade of my first appearance.

I got back to the hotel to find Rustam still waiting for me, with a cool bath drawn, fresh clothes laid out, and a tray with fruit and coffee. I told him if he wanted to get married he'd better be getting along to the temple.

"Church," he corrected me. "I am a Baptist, Master."

Rustam was always full of surprises.

Broadcasting was a little difficult in India because of censorship. The censors were working on a nine-to-five basis. I was broadcasting entirely for John W. Vandercook's network international show that goes on from WEAf at 7:15 every evening. That means 4:45 the following morning in India. So I had to have my broadcast not only written but passed by the censor twelve hours before putting it on the air. That's not exactly calculated to furnish the folks at home with up-to-the-minute news.

That's been fixed up since, so that late news can be received from India, but it didn't really make much difference then, because there wasn't a great deal of spot news, and if anything happened at night nobody much knew about it anyway because they were all in bed.

To offset this trouble about spot news I began going in for personality stuff. I thought that I could perhaps explain India best to America, certainly best to myself,

102 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

through the personalities of its leaders. That may still be the best way. So I present here my impressions of the five men whom I consider the most important in India.

They are Gandhi and Nehru, of course, as representatives of the predominantly Hindu Congress Party; Jinnah, also of course, as representative of the Muslim League; Rajagopalachari, because he seems to be the only human bridge between the two greatest factions, the Hindus and the Mohammedans; and Ambedkar, because he may have a skeleton key to the Indian problem in his eighty million untouchables.

First, then, for Gandhi. I am not going to talk at any length about this little man, because so much has already been said about him. Perhaps I would skip him altogether, for that reason, except for one thing. It doesn't seem to me that it would be quite courteous to ignore a man on whose stomach you have almost stepped.

That happened the first time I saw him. It was June of 1942, and rumors were running around Delhi that the British were getting ready to clap Gandhi into jail again. It is customary to write or wire ahead for an appointment with Gandhi, but this seemed pressing. So Jack Belden of *Time* and I sent a wire that we were coming and jumped a train for Wardha.

We couldn't get an air-conditioned compartment, so we rode for thirty-six hours with a tub of fast-melting ice sloshing between the bunks. But it was not a hard trip, because Jack was just out of Burma, and he was talking the things that he later put into his *Retreat with Stilwell*, some of them terrible, some very beautiful.

We drove the four miles from Wardha to Gandhi's Aschram, or settlement, in a hooded, two-wheeled tonga. It was very hot on those central Indian plains, and we were almost blinded by the glare. So when we were led

into a small thatched hut which had wet matting over the two small windows we were just about blind.

And for that reason I almost stepped on a small bundle on the floor. I did succeed in stepping over it, and then the bundle stirred and emitted a cackle of mirth.

"Here I am," said a shrill, childlike voice, and my contracting pupils showed me that my bundle on the floor was Gandhi, reclining half-naked on a pallet. He held out his hand, and I sat down beside him on the floor. We talked a long time, while an acolyte squatting at his feet pulled the cord of an overhead punkah, and Gandhi's secretary, Mahedev Desai, took stenographic notes. There was a little circle of followers squatting silent against the wall, and at one point some one handed Gandhi a tiny spinning-wheel, but he just played with it as a child plays with a toy.

Before we were done I had made up my mind about Gandhi. I acknowledge freely that I was inclined in advance to doubt both his saintliness and his sincerity. But I tried to meet him with an open mind. I found nothing to change my opinion.

That early opinion had been formed not by anything the British, or the Mohammedan leaders, or such Hindus as disagree with Gandhi, had told me about him. It was due rather to things said by his followers. I had noticed that almost all of them seemed to admire him above all for certain traits of charlatanism they attributed to him.

A publisher of an important Indian paper, who was an ardent Gandhi man, used to tell me with glee how he could fake illness to fool the British, how he had even worked on their sympathies that way to such an extent on one occasion that he got out of jail.

"He can run a high temperature at will," this man told me. "He can assume all the symptoms of grave illness.

104 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

And then when the need is past he recovers just by will power."

I remembered this after I got home and Gandhi staged his twenty-one-day fast in an effort to force his release from prison. I noted with interest the sudden crisis two-thirds of the way through that fast, and then, when the British proved adamant, the way he passed the crisis neatly and virtually came down the stretch of his race against death at a gallop.

Many people have reported their interviews with Gandhi. I would rather let him report my interview. I mentioned that Desai took stenographic notes. Desai's report, with quotes, edited and approved by Gandhi himself, appeared in the following issue of the Mahatma's weekly newspaper, *Harijan*. As a great deal of space was given to this article and it ran under a front-page headline "Important Interview," I think it is safe to assume that Gandhi considered it his statement of his case up to that time.

For that reason I reprint it here. See what you can make of it. Here goes:

The heat here this year has been uncommonly oppressive, and even those who may be said to be inured to it have felt it. But Gandhiji would not listen to any suggestion of moving to a cooler place—so possessed he is of his new idea, so disinclined he is to go to any other place but the environment that has now become part of himself. And though this serious preoccupation leaves him little time to meet people he has willingly met press correspondents and opened his heart out to them. They too in their turn have come in this sweltering heat, but that is a pressman's job—to defy wind and weather and wrest facts out of events. So one hot afternoon two American journalists came—Mr. Chaplin of the International News Service, America, and Mr. Belldon representing the *Life* and *Time*. The latter is fresh from China and Burma. Both had heard rumours in New Delhi

that Gandhiji might soon be arrested, and they naturally did not want to be forestalled. So they came post-haste, without even waiting for a reply giving them an appointment.

It was no joke jogging along in a rickety tonga through the treeless road that runs between Wardha and Sevagram. Gandhiji immediately put them in a good humour. "You came in an air-conditioned coach?" "No," they said, "but we had armed ourselves with some ice." Mr. Chaplin said he was a great friend of the late Jim Mills and that revived our memories of that genial American who, Gandhiji said, after the manner of American journalists, often embellished truth to make it look nicer. Mr. Chaplin demurred to the generalisation, and said they were quite careful about truth. Gandhiji did not mean to suggest that they deliberately mixed untruth with truth; they loved to give truth an attractive, if imaginative, background, as, for instance, Jim Mills described Gandhiji sharing his goat's milk with a tame cat, when there was no cat in the picture. "The native genius" of Americans, John Buchan has said, "is for overstatement, a high-coloured, imaginative, paradoxical extravagance. The British gift is for understatement. Both are legitimate figures of speech. They serve the same purpose, for they call attention to a fact by startling the hearer, for manifestly they are not the plain truth." There, I think, is a just estimate of American journalists.

Gandhiji had just emerged from an intensive talk with another American when these friends came, and so he said greeting them, "One American has been vivisectioning me. I am now at your disposal."

They had read all kinds of things about Gandhiji's latest move—his own words wrenched from their context, and words written about him. "It is your worst side that is known in New Delhi, and not your best," another journalist had said to Gandhiji, and they were therefore anxious to straighten out wrong notions if they had any. Why non-violent non-coöperation, rather than honest straightforward resistance against the Japanese? Far from preventing the Japanese, non-violent non-coöperation, they feared, might prove an invitation to them, and would not that be flying from the frying pan into the fire?

Gandhiji put a counter question in reply:

"Supposing England retires from India for strategic pur-

106 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

poses, and apart from my proposal—as they had to do in Burma—what would happen? What would India do?”

“That is exactly what we have come to learn from you. We would certainly like to know that.”

“Well, therein comes my non-violence. For we have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the united American and British Armies has decided that India is no good as a base, and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the allied forces there. We can’t help it. We have then to depend on what strength we have. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either, worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing we can fall back upon. Now in theory I can prove to you that our non-violent resistance can be wholly successful. We need not kill a single Japanese, we simply give them no quarter.”

“But that non-violence can’t prevent an invasion?”

“In non-violent technique, of course, there can be nothing like preventing an invasion. They will land, but they will land on an inhospitable shore. They may be ruthless and wipe out all the four hundred millions. That would be complete victory. I know you will laugh at it, saying, ‘All this is superhuman, if not absurd.’ I would say you are right, we may not be able to stand that terror and we may have to go through a course of subjection worse than our present state. But we are discussing the theory.”

“But if the British don’t withdraw?”

“I do not want them to withdraw under Indian pressure, nor driven by force of circumstances. I want them to withdraw in their own interest, for their own good name.”

“But what happens to your movement, if you are arrested, as we heard you might be? Or if Mr. Nehru is arrested? Would not the movement go to pieces?”

“No, not if we have worked among the people. Our arrests would work up the movement, they would stir every one in India to do his little bit.”

“Supposing Britain decides to fight to the last man in India, would not your non-violent non-coöperation help the Japanese?” asked Mr. Chaplin reverting to the first question he had asked.

"If you mean non-coöperation with the British, you would be right. We have not come to that stage. I do not want to help the Japanese—not even for freeing India. India during the past fifty or more years of her struggle for freedom has learnt the lesson of patriotism and of not bowing to *any* foreign power. But when the British are offering violent battle, our non-violent battle—our non-violent activity—would be neutralised. Those who believe in armed resistance and in helping the British militarily are and will be helping them. Mr. Amery says he is getting all the men and money they need, and he is right. For the Congress—a poor organisation representing the millions of the poor of India—has not been able to collect in years what they have collected in a day by way of what I would say 'so-called' voluntary subscription. This Congress can only render non-violent assistance. But let me tell you, if you do not know it, that the British do not want it, they don't set any store by it. But whether they do it or not, violent and non-violent resistance cannot go together. So India's non-violence can at best take the form of silence—not obstructing the British forces, certainly not helping the Japanese."

"But not helping the British?"

"Don't you see non-violence cannot give any other aid?"

"But the railways, I hope, you won't stop; the services, too, will be, I hope, allowed to function."

"They will be allowed to function, as they are being allowed today."

"Aren't you then helping the British by leaving the services and the railways alone?" asked Mr. Belldon.

"We are indeed. That is our non-embarrassment policy."

"But what about the presence of American troops here? Every American feels that we should help India to win her freedom."

"It's a bad job."

"Because it is said we are here really to help Britain and not India?"

"I say it is a bad job, because it is an imposition on India. It is not at India's request or with India's consent that they are here. It is enough irritation that we were not consulted before being dragged into this war—I am not sure that the Viceroy even consulted his Executive Council. That is our original com-

108 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

plaint. To have brought the American forces is, in my opinion, to have made the stranglehold on us all the tighter.

"You do not know what is happening in India—it is naturally not your business to go into those things. But let me give you some facts. Thousands of villagers are being summarily asked to vacate their homes and go elsewhere, for the site of their homesteads is needed by the military. Now I ask, where are they to go? Thousands of poor labourers in a certain place, I have heard today, have been asked to evacuate. Paltry compensations are offered them, and they are not even given sufficient notice. This kind of thing will not happen in an independent country. The Sappers and Miners there would first build homes for these people, transport would be provided for them, they would be given at least six months' maintenance allowance before they would be unrooted from their surroundings. Are these things to happen, even before the Japanese have come here? There is no other way, but saying to them, 'you must go,' and if British rule ends, that moral act will save America and Britain. If they choose to remain here, they should remain as friends, not as proprietors of India. The American and British soldiers may remain here, if at all, by virtue of a compact with Free India."

"Don't you think Indian people and leaders have some duty to help accelerate the process?"

"You mean by dotting India with rebellions everywhere? No, my invitation to the British to withdraw is not an idle one. It has to be made good by the sacrifice of the inviters. Public opinion has got to act, and it can act only non-violently."

"Is the possibility of strikes precluded?" wondered Mr. Bellon.

"No," said Gandhiji, "strikes can be and have been non-violent. If railways are worked only to strengthen the British hold on India, they need not be assisted. But before I decide to take any energetic measures I must endeavour to show the reasonableness of my demand. The moment it is complied with, India instead of being sullen becomes an ally. Remember I am more interested than the British in keeping the Japanese out. For Britain's defeat in Indian waters may mean *only the loss of India*, but if Japan wins India loses *everything*."

"If you regard the American troops as an imposition, would

you regard the American Technical Mission also in the same light?" was the next question.

"A tree is judged by its fruit," said Gandhiji succinctly. "I have met Dr. Grady, we have had cordial talks. I have no prejudice against Americans. I have hundreds, if not thousands of friends, in America. The Technical Mission may have nothing but good will for India. But my point is that all the things that are happening are not happening at the invitation or wish of India. Therefore they are all suspect. We cannot look upon them with philosophic calmness, for the simple reason that we cannot close our eyes, as I have said, to the things that are daily happening in front of our eyes. Areas are being vacated and turned into military camps, people being thrown on their own resources. Hundreds, if not thousands, on their way from Burma perished without food and drink, and the wretched discrimination stared even these miserable people in the face. One route for the whites, another for the blacks. Provision of food and shelter for the whites, none for the blacks! And discrimination even on their arrival in India! India is being ground down to dust and humiliated, even before the Japanese advent, not for India's defence—and no one knows for whose defence. And so one fine morning I came to the decision to make this honest demand: 'For Heaven's sake leave India alone. Let us breathe the air of freedom. It may choke us, suffocate us, as it did the slaves on their emancipation. But I want the present sham to end.'"

"But it is the British troops you have in mind, not the American?"

"It does not make for me the slightest difference, the whole policy is one and indivisible."

"Is there any hope of Britain listening?"

"I will not die without that hope. And if there is a long lease of life for me, I may even see it fulfilled. For there is nothing unpractical in the proposal, no insuperable difficulties about it. Let me add that if Britain is not willing to do so wholeheartedly Britain does not deserve to win."

Gandhiji had over and over again said that an orderly withdrawal would result in a sullen India becoming a friend and ally. These American friends now explored the implications of

110 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

that possible friendship: "Would a Free India declare war against Japan?"

"Free India need not do so. It simply becomes the ally of the Allied Powers, simply out of gratefulness for the payment of a debt, however overdue. Human nature thanks the debtor when he discharges the debt."

"How then would this alliance fit in with India's non-violence?"

"It is a good question. The *whole* of India is not non-violent. If the whole of India had been non-violent, there would have been no need for my appeal to Britain, nor would there be any fear of a Japanese invasion. But my non-violence is represented possibly by a hopeless minority, or perhaps by India's dumb millions who are temperamentally non-violent. But there too the question may be asked: 'What have they done?' They have done nothing, I agree; but they may act when the supreme test comes, and they may not. I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have has been discounted by the British as non-violence of the weak. And so all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice, so that it might find an echo in the British heart. It is made from a moral plane, and even as they do not hesitate to act desperately in the physical field and take grave risks, let them for once act desperately on the moral field and declare that India is independent today, irrespective of India's demand."

"But what does a free India mean, if, as Mr. Jinnah said, Muslims will not accept Hindu rule?"

"I have not asked the British to hand over India to the Congress or to the Hindus. Let them entrust India to God or in modern parlance to anarchy. Then all the parties will fight one another like dogs, or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement. I shall expect non-violence to arise out of that chaos."

"But to *whom* are the British to say—'India is free'? asked the friends with a certain degree of exasperation.

"To the world," said Gandhiji without a moment's hesitation. "Automatically the Indian army is disbanded from that moment, and they decide to pack up as soon as they can. Or they may declare they would pack up only after the war is over,

but that they would expect no help from India, impose no taxes, raise no recruits—beyond what help India chooses to give voluntarily. British rule will cease from that moment, no matter what happens to India afterwards. Today it is all a hypocrisy, unreality. I want that to end. The new order will come only when that falsity ends.”

“It is an unwarranted claim Britain and America are making,” said Gandhiji concluding the talk, “the claim of saving democracy and freedom. It is a wrong thing to make that claim, when there is this terrible tragedy of holding a whole nation in bondage.”

Q. “What can America do to have your demand implemented?”

A. “If my demand is admitted to be just beyond cavil, America can insist on the implementing of the Indian demand as a condition of her financing Britain and supplying her with her matchless skill in making war machines. He who pays the piper has the right to call the tune. Since America has become the predominant partner in the allied cause she is partner also in Britain’s guilt. The Allies have no right to call their cause to be morally superior to the Nazi cause so long as they hold in custody the fairest part and one of the most ancient nations of the earth.”

Well, Gentlemen, that’s Gandhi. It’s his personal appearance. That’s the great mind that’s supposed to lead India out of the valley of serfdom into the sunny plain of freedom. I rest my case.

What Gandhi has got by on, I think, is a sort of child-like charm, so that you like him in spite of yourself. I like him. But I don’t think he’s great. I don’t even think he’s honest. Since those are rough words, let me give you an example.

Gandhi makes a great play of living like the humblest of his followers. So when he travels he always travels third class, which in India is very crowded and very uncomfortable traveling. At least, it is for the ordinary traveler with a third-class ticket.

112 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

But when Gandhi travels, his acolytes pick out a third-class carriage and announce to the crowded human cattle therein that the Mahatma is going to ride in that carriage. So they all pile out, crowding other third-class compartments still more. And the Mahatma rides in solitary state, with only enough of his immediate staff to see that he is watered and fanned and fed.

I saw Gandhi several times after my first meeting, but only two of those meetings add anything to the complete picture. In early August the Congress Party which Gandhi runs without holding any office held its annual convention in Bombay. Gandhi was there to supply the fireworks, which incidentally blew him right into jail. The day before he was to speak I attended the daily twilight services he was holding at his temporary home, the very spacious manor of one of India's princes of industry.

The people poured into the grounds of Birla House on fashionable Malabar Hill for that meeting and squatted close-packed on canvas laid over the green lawn. Gandhi squatted on a kitchen table on the porch and led them in song (Japanese song, incidentally) and prayer. He then reminded them, as the first drops of an in-rolling storm began to fall, that the Congress Party needed money. And he produced a big basket into which he told them they could drop their offerings as they left.

As the rain spattered they were herded past him, dropping pies and pice and here and there a rupee into the basket. They departed, no one was left but Gandhi. He was completely engrossed. Scooping up the coins he formed them into neat piles and set them before him on the table. So I left him, an aged and yet child-like figure squatting on a table, happily counting pennies in the rain.

It was the very next day that Gandhi overstepped the bounds of British patience. He made a public speech in

which he declared his own personal independence of Britain, called on Indian newspapers to suspend publication, Indian children to strike against school, Indian soldiers to defy their officers. He asked for imprisonment almost in so many words, and he got it before that night was done.

It is almost impossible to speak of Gandhi without speaking of Nehru, too. I will do this very briefly. Nehru has enjoyed a popularity in America second only to Gandhi. The Mahatma has been pictured as the grand old man of Indian independence, Nehru as the glamour boy of the same movement.

Nehru certainly has charm; so many Indians do. But I am afraid he walked out of his rôle as glamour boy with me the first time I met him, because he took his hat off. He is always pictured wearing a natty white cap of the "overseas" variety, the sort called a "Gandhi cap" in India, though Gandhi never wears one. It is a shock when Nehru takes off this cap to discover that he is as bald as Gandhi except for a rim of hair that just connects with his cap.

That was startling, but any one has the right to be bald, and to conceal that fact. What was much more disturbing to me was to discover that Nehru is not his own man, that for all his baldness and his crescent of gray hair he is still a little boy at Gandhi's knee.

I saw him at a house belonging to the party, and he was for the moment master of that house. He sat in a chair, and he smoked cigarets. But when he is in the Presence he sits on the floor, and he would never dare to smoke. He scarcely dares to think, certainly not to act on his thoughts, without Gandhi's approval.

Nehru and Gandhi disagree on almost every major

114 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

problem: non-violence, India's place among the United Nations, the war. Yet Nehru plays yes-man to Gandhi from dawn to dusk, and it is Gandhi who runs the party, though he holds no office in it. Nehru is the chief victim of the Gandhi myth. I think the explanation is that Nehru's father and Gandhi were close friends: in Gandhi's presence Nehru is still a little boy who must be very polite and do just as he is told or he will be sent out to play in the yard. I am certain that the clarion voice to lead India to freedom is not Nehru's.

As Gandhi and Nehru typify the predominantly Hindu Congress Party, so the second largest party, the Muslim League, is typified by its titular head, Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

Jinnah is one of my favorite characters in any country. He is a very vain man. He is a stubborn man and, in some personal relationships at least, a stupid man. His enemies say he is not even a good Mohammedan, not really a Mohammedan at all. But he is both clever and honest, and he has a plan that could work. For a happy settlement of the Indian problem Jinnah is my man.

Jinnah was the first Indian big-shot politician I came to know in India. Not because I had singled him out ahead of time as the top man, or had any preferences for Mohammedans over Hindus. He merely happened to be in Delhi when I got there. He was the only political leader in Delhi at the time, so I saw him first.

Many Mohammedans in India haven't been Mohammedans very long. The invading Moguls ruled India with an iron hand for a thousand years before the British took over. Even after that, and to this day, the Mohammedans are a tougher race than the Hindus. And in some localities a lot of Hindus found it expedient to change

their religion, to put on the fez, bow toward Mecca, ride the bandwagon. Jinnah's enemies say that one of his grandfathers was a Hindu, that the very name of Jinnah is a Hindu name, meaning "little." That may be, but if he's just Mr. Little to the Hindus he's Big Mr. Little to me.

The Jinnah family one generation back, at any rate, must have been devout in their Mohammedanism, because Jinnah himself is named for the successor of the Prophet, and his sister is named Fatima, the name of the Prophet's daughter who married Mohammed Ali.

They were together, these two, Mohammed Ali and Fatima, in the garden beside their little Delhi bungalow, when I called on Jinnah for the first time. Fatima drifted away among the hollyhocks, and Mohammed Ali led me into the house.

He's a pretty striking creature, this big Mr. Little. He's easily six feet tall and thin as spaghetti, with a bronze face that achieves dignity and force despite a somewhat rat-like formation of the mouth. He was wearing skin-tight jodhpurs and a long, tight, high-collared coat of white watered silk known in India as an *aschkand*. His iron-gray hair was brushed straight back so that one white lock starting at the forehead rose from above his eyes like a plume. His feet are small, and he was wearing patent leather dancing pumps.

The first thing that Jinnah convinced me of was that the eighty to a hundred million Muslims of India would never submit to a Government dominated by the Hindus. He convinced me, I think, because his argument was derogatory of his own people rather than of the Hindus.

"The reason we're in the fix we are now," he told me, "is that we were stubborn and stupid. We had ruled this country for a thousand years, and then we got weak and

116 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

the British took it away from us. The Hindus, being what they are, bowed to the new rulers, learned their language, insinuated themselves into the new life, and did well. But we were sullen and stubborn. We refused to learn English. Even to-day the illiteracy among Moham-medans is far higher than among Hindus. Only lately have we begun to see that we must educate ourselves, must perfect ourselves in the ways of the West as well as the East if we are to regain our old power. Now the time seems to be approaching when Britain will step aside. Living under a British rule has been bad enough. We will never live under a Hindu rule."

That made sense to me. And then he had another idea that seemed reasonable. He said that India had never been one country. The Moguls never ruled it all the way down to the triangle's tip. The British claim only chunks of it, the rest being in the hands of at least technically sovereign Maharajas.

"Why all this talk of Mother India?" he said. "There is no Mother India. There never has been and never will be an Indian nation. You might just as well say that all North America must be one country because it is one geographical chunk. Canada and the United States and Mexico are able to share that continent. So we can share this sub-continent between Hindu and Mohammedan countries."

I've been over this argument pretty carefully and have discussed it with many Hindus and many British. They won't agree with it, but not one of them has been able to break it down. I still think that when the time comes for Britain to pull out of India (perhaps I should say when and if) there will have to be a division into two countries. I can see no reason why a 25 per cent minority of strong

people should be subjected to the rule of a 75 per cent majority of weaker people.

I learned a lot more about Jinnah later in Bombay, which is his home town. He has made a fortune as a lawyer and has a fine big house on Malabar Hill. He lives in considerable state with his sister Fatima.

There is a daughter, too, but Jinnah doesn't speak to her. And that case will explain what I meant when I said he was a very stubborn and sometimes stupid man. Jinnah was married to a woman of great beauty. She was a Parsee, and he made her enter the ranks of Islam before the marriage.

Jinnah's daughter Dina inherited her mother's beauty and her father's intellect. And she too married a Parsee, though one who had espoused Christianity. Jinnah insisted that the fiancé become a Mohammedan. Instead of that Dina became a Christian, and Jinnah disowned her.

It was in Bombay, too, that I sensed the full opposition to Jinnah from the orthodox members of his own religion. The orthodox Mohammedan will not smoke, and Jinnah smokes in public. Even the rank and file observe Ramadan, a period during which there is fasting, from dawn to dusk. I and several other reporters called on Jinnah about nine o'clock in the morning on the first day of Ramadan. A servant showed us into an ante-room and told us Jinnah would be with us as soon as he had finished breakfast. Word of that got around town, and Jinnah's enemies made the most of it, even inserting the information that it was believed to be bacon he was eating.

I knew an industrialist in Bombay, another man named Mohammed, who was very orthodox and for that reason couldn't stand the mention of Jinnah. He told me once that

118 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

if Jinnah showed signs of gaining real power he would denounce him in the mosques.

"Why," he said with shocked loathing, "the fellow drinks."

But for all the opposition of the very orthodox, Jinnah is the one man who has a strong hold on the Muslims of India. I think he would be an able and an honest leader of an independent country.

Of course I am ready to admit that my own feelings about the war may have swayed my judgments of Indian leaders. If Japan invades India I am convinced that many thousands of Hindus will join them, many millions will simply stand aside. But Jinnah has told me, and I believe him, that in event of such an invasion he will lead his eighty million Mohammedans against the Japanese if he has no weapon but a table-leg and they are armed only with stones.

I don't think the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims, certainly not those between Gandhi and Jinnah, can be bridged. And I know only one man who has even tried to do this. As often happens with peace-makers, he has been discredited by his own party for this and cold-shouldered by the other.

That man is C. Rajagopalachari, former Premier of Madras, former Congress Party leader in Madras, former close friend of Gandhi, whom he once threatened to put in jail in Madras long before the British began imprisoning him.

When Raja, as even the Indian papers call him to save paper and printing, was Madras Premier, Gandhi went there to head some anti-British agitation. Raja got hold of him and said that while he was premier, there was

going to be order. He escorted Gandhi to the station and saw him on to a train with the warning that if he came back for the purpose of making trouble he would land in jail.

Later the two became close friends and fellow party workers. Raja's daughter married Gandhi's son Davedas, editor of the *Hindustan Times* in Delhi. After failure of the Cripps negotiations, Raja came to the conclusion that nothing could be achieved toward any independence while there were two warring parties in India. He suggested an interim coalition party, formed with the understanding that after the war the Muslim League could set up a separate Mohammedan country if it still wanted to.

That satisfied Jinnah. It might well have satisfied the British if Gandhi would agree. But Gandhi wouldn't. The Congress Party wouldn't. And Raja was so thoroughly set down by other Congress leaders that he was forced to resign.

The only time I ever talked to him at any length was in Davedas Gandhi's little penthouse on top of the *Hindustan Times*. Raja wears Indian peasant dress like Gandhi, except that he covers himself from shoulders to ankles. He sits cross-legged on the floor like Gandhi, and his diet is almost as simple as Gandhi's. He even looks a good deal like Gandhi.

He also is a pleasant talker, and while I was with him I was under the impression that I was getting quite a story. Later, when I went over my notes and sat down to write, I found just what I found after talking to most Indian intellectuals. They pour words and phrases and sentences in a heap before you, and when you scoop them up for examination they run through your fingers like grains of sand.

120 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

After about three months in India I received from Seymour Berkson, the I.N.S. Managing Editor in New York, the best assignment I have ever had. It was the kind of assignment that is a reporter's dream. The cable read:

"Things seem stirring again Libya. Proceed Cairo immediately and then go wherever action hottest."

Perhaps only a reporter can appreciate the thrill of that. No strings. No need to cable home and consult about next moves. Just figure things out for yourself and then go . . . wherever action hottest.

After receiving that cable I applied immediately for passage to Cairo and transfer of my accreditation from the Wavell army to the Auchinleck army. A British official showed me a cable just received from the Auk. He had all the foreign correspondents in his theater that he had facilities for handling. Until further orders no more correspondents were to be transferred to his zone under any circumstances.

I cabled Cairo, New York, Washington, London, but all to no avail. The Auk was adamant, and in that region he was boss. "Wherever action hottest." Ha! I'd had the news roads of the world opened up to me, only to have the door to them slammed in my face.

I went back to studying the "Indian problem."

The annual convention of the All-India Congress Committee, the national committee of the Congress Party, was called for the first week in August at Bombay. I'd seen Bombay only briefly, dog-legging back that way from Ghandi's Aschram to Delhi, but I had liked what I saw. So I left a few days early with Preston Grover of the Associated Press.

We rode in style, in an air-conditioned compartment,

and the twenty-four hours passed quickly. Pres is a big, engaging fellow, self-effacing and a little slow to know, but well worth knowing. He'd been twice torpedoed in the Mediterranean before being transferred to India.

There was only one room available at the Taj Mahal Hotel, and that was a small single room on the top floor, but we got them to move in a cot. I stayed there more than a month, and despite all the violence, all the death and destruction we saw, it was the pleasantest month of all that long assignment.

We worked hard, seeing people before the convention started and attending the sessions after that. But we had our evenings to ourselves and often a good part of the day, too, and Bombay is a lovely city.

Chiefly, though, I think my fondness for Bombay traces back to people I met through Pres Grover, who had been there often. Most of all it was the hospitality of the Stimsons. They meant to me in Bombay what Frances and Peter Muir meant in Delhi. They were a family, and I was very lonesome for my own family.

Bob Stimson is a former Cambridge don who by one of those exchange arrangements worked for a while on *Time* in New York. He married Kay Austen of the New York *World-Telegram* and is now assistant editor of the *Times* of India, she head of the Bombay office of OWI. They lived in a green apartment building overlooking the sea, and it was always open house there.

Bob got us temporary membership in the Bombay Gymkana, where such cheddar cheese was served with lunch that I swore I would never leave while it lasted. My office in New York finally replied in surprise to a message I sent them from Bombay, saying they had thought I'd gone back to Delhi two weeks before. I never got around to telling them it was on account of the cheddar.

122 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

It was in Bombay that I met Ambedkar, the political chieftain of the untouchables, for the first time. He lives in Bombay, and I went to see him in his suburban home.

It's a nice enough house, the Ambedkar house, a corner house of much the sort you might find in East Orange, New Jersey: plain, roomy, comfortable, unpretentious. Dr. Ambedkar receives his guests in the second-floor study, a room lined with books running from detective stories to many volumes on all sorts of racial problems.

"How," I asked him, "can I tell an untouchable from a touchable? When I saw gypsy-looking women in Delhi with heavy anklets clanking above bare feet as they carried bricks on their heads for the new American buildings, I thought they must be untouchables. But then I was told that untouchables weren't allowed to wear jewelry. I saw the ragged tonga drivers and thought they must be untouchables, but I was told that untouchables couldn't be tonga drivers; no Indian would ride with them. I saw miserable creatures eating food spread on leaves in the gutter and was sure I had found untouchables. But then I saw one of them throw his food in the street because the shadow of a better-dressed man had fallen on it, the shadow of an untouchable. But I couldn't see what marked him as untouchable."

Dr. Ambedkar gave me a wry smile.

"There is no way to tell an untouchable," he said. "The beggar you mention must merely have known that other man and known him to be without caste. The point is that *we* know we are untouchables. Any well-dressed untouchable could go to a hotel, for instance, and get a reservation. But he won't because he knows that if some one who knows him comes along he will be denounced and thrown out, probably beaten."

I asked him about himself. He is a portly, well-dressed, cultivated man who would pass in any society. Surely, I said, such nonsense couldn't extend to him.

"This is a caste Hindu neighborhood," he told me. "I have lived here for years. Yet I have never been invited into the home of any of my neighbors, nor would one of them enter my house. Those who know me and my status cross the street when we meet to avoid close contact."

I got a cynical grimace from him when I asked if his law practice was entirely among untouchables as a result of this antipathy of the caste Hindus.

"When a man is charged with murder or robbery or other serious crimes," he said, "he hunts around for the best lawyer he can find to get him off. He doesn't care if that lawyer is an untouchable. He wouldn't care if the lawyer was the Devil himself. I have a large law practice among caste Hindus, but that's where my contact with them ends."

There are some seventy-five to eighty million untouchables in India, and Dr. Ambedkar is trying to weld them into a close political group so that they can do something for themselves. Gandhi has fought him for this constituency, and that is one of Ambedkar's chief reasons, I think, for hating Gandhi. The Mahatma calls the untouchables "Harijan" or God's children, and has named his weekly newspaper for them. But at the same time he preaches the virtue of all men staying in the class to which they were born.

Jinnah calls Gandhi a political blackmailer. Ambedkar calls him a charlatan. The truth is probably somewhere in between. Or maybe they're both right.

It was from American missionaries in Bombay that I learned Ambedkar was "shopping" for a religion. You see,

the untouchables are Hindus, but with very few exceptions they are not permitted to enter the temples. So Ambedkar wants another religion for them, a religion that they can observe as they wish. He's made no secret of the fact that he's in the market, and he generally moves in a buzzing aura of missionaries. What a stroke for any evangelical sect, to bring upward of eighty million converts into the fold at one swoop!

I didn't get a chance to ask Ambedkar how he was coming along on this quest while I was in Bombay, but I did ask him later in Delhi. I asked him if he was leaning toward Christianity.

"Not particularly," he said. "The Christian missionaries are very good with the babies and children. But after the children leave the mission schools little is done for them; they drift away."

When I left India Dr. Ambedkar seemed to be a little partial to Buddhism, which was too bad, because that is a Japanese religion, though observed elsewhere also. But Ambedkar was still toying also with the notion of a brand-new religion, built to order for the untouchables. Something may come of that.

Ambedkar thinks Gandhi's non-violence program is a political dodge, as Jinnah does, and he is as firm as Jinnah in his belief that India's salvation lies in an Allied victory. In fact, one of his chief campaigns is for official permission to raise an army of untouchables to fight under British command. He told me he could raise an army of ten million. The British try to maintain a balance between the various factions in Indian life, however; try to bow when possible to prejudices of the majority or the chief minority. Caste Hindus disapprove of having untouchables in the army. The last I heard there were only a couple of regiments of them. Doing very well, too, I believe.

The Congress Party convention was held in a great pandal or circus tent capable of holding about ten thousand people. On the dais were various party officials, including President Azad and Nehru, but all were subordinated to Gandhi. For him an old-fashioned sofa was placed in the middle of the platform, and he sat there day after day, semi-naked but still perspiring from the heat, fanned continuously by half a dozen acolytes hovering behind him.

He arrived for the first session leaning on a long staff. Some one had surreptitiously placed on his forehead the carmine spot which many Hindus affect but which Gandhi himself does not wear. It ill-became him. He stood grinning toothlessly in response to the ovation, his bare ribs sticking out like the framework of a derelict ship, and that scarlet smudge on his wrinkled forehead below the bald dome of his shiny head. There was something indecent about it. He looked like a superannuated satyr caught unawares just after a skittish encounter with a lip-rouged nymph. Whoever put that mark on him in well-intentioned homage did him a disservice.

The speeches rolled on, hour after hour and day after day. The Indians are good orators, and they love to listen to oratory. And this time they even had logic on their side. Time and again they beat upon one argument for which I had no answer, and I never heard a satisfactory answer from the British.

At this time, midsummer of 1942, affairs were not going well for our side. There had been defeats all across the Pacific. Singapore and Malaya were gone. The Philippines were gone. Burma was gone. The British had again been driven back into Egypt from Libya. The Russians were being driven back by the Germans' second summer offensive. Those were dark days.

"See what has happened elsewhere," Nehru harangued his listeners from the pandal dais. "The people of Malaya depended on the British for their defense. When the Japanese came, the British withdrew, but the people of Malaya had nowhere to flee. And then the British bombed them after the Japanese came in. The people of Burma depended on the British for their defense. But the British withdrew before the Japanese invasion. The people of Burma had no place to retreat. Now the British and the Americans are both bombing Burma.

"What is India's position? Because we have been forced to, because we have been forbidden to form an army of our own, we, too, depend almost entirely on the British for our defense. But if the Japanese invade India, what is more natural than that the British withdraw from India too? And then bomb us.

"That is why we demand complete independence now. We want to stand on our own feet, defend ourselves. The British have proved themselves incapable of defending us."

Day after day the temper of the people was raised to a higher pitch. The climax came on the final day, with a speech by Gandhi himself. That was what every one had been waiting for. And it was all that the most enthusiastic had hoped for. It was a humdinger. It was the torch that set off the explosion.

We reporters were sitting in the front row, facing the dais, and we had considerable trouble because the speeches were all in Hindustani. We each had an interpreter, but that is not always safe in India. The national feeling is so strong that an interpreter is quite capable of filling in what he considers the blanks if a speaker doesn't quite come up to his mark. So we had to check back and forth and make very sure we weren't reporting words that were never spoken from the podium.

We'd thought our troubles would be over when Gandhi spoke, because on such occasions he is accustomed to make his main talk in Hindustani and then give a summary in English. But at the final session we were told that he would speak only in Hindustani. Pres Grover decided to alter that. He scribbled a note and after showing it to me sent it by messenger to the Mahatma. It said:

DEAR MR. GANDHI:

After your talk in Hindustani won't you please say a few words in English for the enemy aliens? Thank you.

PRESTON GROVER.

Associated Press of America

Gandhi took the note and read it. A slow grin split his face, and he looked down at us and nodded. We were all set. At least we thought we were.

Gandhi gave his speech from the sofa, a kneeling acolyte holding the microphone in front of him. It was a good speech. That is, it was well delivered. There was passion in it, wrapped around the logic with which Nehru had already dealt. And it went right to the point.

He declared his own personal independence of Britain, and he called on all Indians to do likewise. He called on all publishers of Indian newspapers to suspend publication. He called on shop-keepers to put up their shutters. He called on school children to strike from their classes, and on soldiers to disobey their officers.

In effect, he issued an open invitation to the Japanese to walk in and make themselves at home.

Then he spoke in English. And all his fire was quenched, his vigor spent. For fifteen minutes he gave an exhibition of a tired old man wandering conversationally down paths of remembrance. He talked mostly about a visit he made once to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in China and how

charming Madame Chiang was. The audience laughed with seeming embarrassment when he said "I fell in love with Madame Chiang."

There wasn't a word in the English talk worth using. But the Hindustani talk, when we finally got it expertly translated, was dynamite. I remember that I wrote that night that Gandhi had laid himself wide open to arrest under the Defense of India Act, under that part of the act that has since been ruled unconstitutional.

We weren't permitted to broadcast from Bombay, though the biggest station was there, because no radio censors were on deck. So I had to send telegraph stories to N.B.C. in Delhi as well as wireless stories to I.N.S. in New York.

I flatly predicted Gandhi's arrest, and yet I got caught short on the arrest itself. I had predicted even better than I knew.

Pres and I had made a date for breakfast the following day at the home of a Pennsylvania Dutch woman and her Hindu husband. They lived in a suburb, and they served the best pancakes and sausages in India.

We had had several trying days, so we went to bed early after clearing up our stories about the convention. And we slept until we were awakened by the telephone in the morning. It was the Pennsylvania Dutch woman.

"I'm afraid we'll have to postpone the breakfast," she said. "We understand there's apt to be a good deal of disturbance due to the arrest of Gandhi and all the other Congress leaders. We'd better all stay at home."

In that way did we, the veteran reporters, find out about the arrests! We certainly didn't go to collect that lovely breakfast, but also we certainly didn't stay at home. We jumped a cab and drove to the Birla House on Malabar

Hill, where Gandhi had been staying. The story was true. The police had taken him from his bed early in the morning and whisked him off by train. They'd taken every party leader they could lay their hands on. It was a clean sweep.

We started downtown, but before we'd gone many blocks we ran into our first mob. And it was a good one. It was gathered at the intersection of two broad streets near the Congress Party headquarters, which was occupied by the police. We got out of our cab and walked down to look it over.

It never occurred to us to be frightened. We had been in India so long, knew so many Indians well, that it never occurred to us they wouldn't like us. As it turned out, this particular mob didn't dislike us; it darned near loved us to death.

Our appearance threw an awful fright into the police trying to keep order there. And it did look ugly for a minute. We were in the British uniform of shirt and shorts, and both police and civilians took us for British. The mob surged in. The police drove them back.

You've probably read, in newspaper accounts of disturbances in India, about the *lathis* the police there use. They're generally described as bamboo wands. You might as well call a Mickey Finn a soft drink. The Indian police *lathi* is six feet long, at least two inches thick, and generally loaded at the business end with lead or some other equally persuasive metal. The *lathi* is a lethal weapon.

The Indian policeman is a full Indian, whether Hindu, Mohammedan, or Sikh. The police officers are largely "Anglo-Indians," a designation formerly applied to Britishers resident in India, but now only to the children of mixed Anglo-Indian parentage. The Anglo-Indian is a peculiar and a pathetic person. Usually very intelligent, he is not accepted socially either by the British or by the

130 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Indians. There is a separate Anglo-Indian society in India, and the Anglo-Indians move in the circle of that society exclusively.

For two reasons they hold most of the jobs as minor railroad officials and as police officers. The first reason is that they are intelligent, and the second is that they are in many ways anti-Indian. At least they have no qualms against being very severe with Indians, right up to and including shooting them to death.

An official of the Indian Government, himself a high-caste Hindu, first pointed out to me the Anglo-Indian's fierce loyalty to the British and antipathy to the Indians.

"There just isn't any sense to it," he said, "but there it is. There are few marriages between whites and Indians. Almost every Anglo-Indian is the result of either the seduction or the rape of his mother by a white man. You'd think he would hate his father for that, and sympathize with his mother, but it works just the other way."

As Pres and I walked down toward that mob on the first day of the August riots, the Anglo-Indian police officers, thinking we were British and seeing that the crowd was hungry for our blood, ordered a *lathi* charge. It wasn't pretty, but it was effective, and as the Indians gave way without fighting back, bloodshed was averted—for a little while.

When we explained that we were Americans the police officers advised us to leave but said we were free to do as we wished. Still feeling very safe in our Americanism and our honest liking for the Indians as a people, we walked on and were engulfed in a tidal wave of gesticulating and shouting men. They were already beginning to show signs of the hysteria which led later to hundreds of deaths by gunfire. But they weren't completely in the grip of that hysteria yet, and we managed to convey to them

that we were Americans and that whatever argument they had was not with us.

Their temper changed in a split second. From wanting to tear us to pieces they suddenly wanted to exalt us to the position of champions of Indian nationalism. We were seized from all sides and tossed rather than raised to their shoulders. They started a parade. We looked beseechingly at the Anglo-Indian officers, but no rescue lay in that direction. We had turned down their very good advice to withdraw when we could, and now we just got cold stares.

We succeeded finally in extricating ourselves, after promising to tell Americans just what the truth was as we saw it, through the newspapers and by radio. We got back to our cab and drove without further adventure to the censors' room in the heart of the city.

There we found that permission was just coming through to pass the first stories of the arrest and public excitement, so we lost nothing after all by being late. But if it hadn't been for that Pennsylvania Dutch woman we would have been still sleeping in the Taj.

While we were at the censors', word came in that Mrs. Gandhi, who seldom takes part in politics and who had not been arrested with her husband, had been picked up later when she appeared to make an open-air speech at a park where Gandhi had been scheduled to speak. There had been a riot, and the police had used tear gas grenades to clear the park.

We began to realize then that we were really in for it, that the Gandhi followers had meant what they said when they had spoken of violence that would follow arrest of the apostle of non-violence. It was hard to believe, because the Hindus of Bombay are an even more timorous people ordinarily than the Hindus of other sections. And

the average Hindu is not, with a few regional exceptions, a man who tends to physical action.

Most of the people in and around Bombay are Gugerati. Early in the war against Japan a few enemy bombs were dropped above Madras, clear on the other side of India; this caused the Gugerati to evacuate Bombay by the tens of thousands.

On my first visit to Bombay I had asked a Gugerat about this, and he had admitted without any feeling that the people had been plain scared by the very idea of bombs.

"We Gugerati," he said, "are frightful men; it is merely our nature."

I had laughed at the time over this use of the word "frightful" to mean subject to fright, but these same men had indeed become frightful in the proper meaning of the word under stress of their fanatic love for Gandhi—or their mass hypnotism by him.

Pres and I went back to the hotel to make plans for covering whatever was in prospect. For one thing, we needed a guide, and we hired one from some A.V.G. boys who were just preparing to take a ship for home. He was a Mohammedan, and his name was Genghis Khan, or something so near to it that we called him that. He said he knew the city and was not afraid. Then we hired a taxi from the hotel rank, and there we made our first mistake, though we didn't discover it until later, so much later that it was almost too late to repair.

We told Khan to direct our driver to whatever part of the city he thought was most likely to be the scene of rioting. This was not bravery on our part, merely routine reportorial work. That's the way such news is gathered, and it was our job to gather it.

The central section of the city looked much as usual, though it seemed to me there were more people in the street. Several times we passed columns of British troops in battle dress and with rifles on their shoulders, but we thought it might be just "showing the flag" for psychological reasons. Some of those soldiers were to do more shooting in the streets of Bombay than they had done in Burma, where the Japanese were like shadows among the jungle trees.

We cruised out along the harbor, past the stony Hindu bathing beach, up Malabar Hill, and so down into the outlying districts of the city. Then we began to come to scenes of violence. Two big red buses stood flaming at the curb. A trolley-car was wrecked on the tracks, its windows broken and the seats thrown out on the street. The shutters were drawn and locked over all the shop-windows. We saw side streets barricaded with piles of stone. We told Khan to have the driver go down one of those streets to see what would happen. The driver listened and then stopped the car and began to cry. Khan looked at him in disgust.

"He is not even a Hindu," he told us. "He is a Portuguese. He comes from the Portuguese colony of Goa down south of Bombay. The Goanese are no good, worse than Hindus. He says he's afraid. He wants to go back to the hotel."

We said that was all right, to go back, and we'd get a new driver.

"I'll get you a driver," Khan offered. "A Mohammedan."

But on the way we passed a district police station, so we stopped there and went into the Inspector's room to get any reports there might be. The Inspector told us there'd been a big riot by the Hindu bathing beach; it must have broken out just after we passed.

"Here comes the sub-inspector," he said. "He was there."

The man who came in was a typical Anglo-Indian: rather light in color, even of feature, precise of speech, and intelligent in appearance. A fine man, you'd say at first glance, and yet there was something missing in his make-up, some window within him seemed to be closed.

"It's all over," he reported. "Pretty rough while it lasted. One of our men rather badly hurt. Hit in the face by a big stone."

The Inspector asked if there had been any casualties among the rioters. The sub-inspector shifted to the crook of his right arm a big pistol fitted into a steel skeleton stock which permitted it to be used as a rifle.

"Lots of bruises," he said. "One killed."

The Inspector asked if he was sure about the death. Killing had been avoided up to then. The police were under orders to use only *lathis* and tear gas except as a last resort. This would be first blood if true, and it might lead to anything.

"I ought to be sure," the sub-inspector replied impassively. "I killed him. He threw the stone that hit one of my men in the face. I shot him dead."

We asked if there was any chance we might see some action if we went back to the bathing beach, but the sub-inspector was very positive that violence was done with for that part of town.

"You won't see anything around these parts of town today," he said. "They've learned their lesson."

So we told our little Goanese he could drive on back to the hotel. We had enough material for a lead story even if it was second-hand. We could try again later for eye-witness stuff. The police station was on a wide avenue which was almost deserted. But we had to turn down into

side streets to get back to the center of town. And we were not more than three blocks from the police station in one of those streets when the mob got us.

It appeared from nowhere, from everywhere. It blocked the street ahead, and it closed in on us from behind. The Goanese jammed on the brakes and began to sob. Then the storm hit us. Stones, bottles, cocoanuts. All the car windows came in with a shower of safety-glass crystals—Bombay diamonds, we called them, when we became better acquainted with them in the ensuing days.

That mob had murder in its heart. Pres and I folded over on our knees and yelled to Khan in the front seat to get going.

Somehow Khan managed to reach across the driver and get the car into gear. Then he stepped on the accelerator, and the Goanese had the choice of steering or running head-on into a building. We plowed straight through the crowd, still under a hail of stones, and swung through a dizzy succession of alleys, each one of which seemed to be a dead end until it would suddenly branch off into another alley. All this time the Goanese was wailing and steering for dear life, with Khan's foot hard on the gas pedal. Khan looked around and laughed.

"He doesn't know which to cry loudest for," he said, "himself, his car, or his wife and children. He's already calling his family his widow and orphans. We'll get a Mohammedan."

When we got out of the car at the hotel a shower of broken glass that had been blasted into the open neck of Pres's shirt sprinkled out from the legs of his shorts. But not one of us got so much as a scratch. That's what safety glass will do for you. The car was a wreck, though. We told the Goanese to take it to a shop and we'd pay the bill.

We expected to encounter trouble with the censors, but it was less than we had feared. There was the most intelligent censorship in Bombay during that trying period that I have seen anywhere since the war began. Or perhaps I should say the most intelligent censors. The rules were simple and reasonable. All news out of India, whether radio or press, has to go by air and so is immediately available to the Japanese. That makes a difference.

The rules were that we couldn't mention damage to any main communication lines or any shutdown of war factories prior to official announcement. We couldn't mention tear gas, because it might be construed to mean poison gas, but we could say tear "smoke."

Pending a directive from Delhi, the Bombay censors wouldn't let me say flatly that any one had been killed in the first day's rioting, but they decided it would be all right for me to quote the sub-inspector of police as reporting to his superior that he had killed a man. That censorship was a reporter's dream. Except for word of main-line communications sabotage, which was widespread, and tie-up of war factories, which was general, America got a complete and immediate report on those riots. By the end of the first day the riots were country-wide, and the situation was admittedly grave.

The Mohammedan driver whom Khan got us lived up to specifications and in some ways went beyond them. He had two faults. He was obedient to traffic signals, and if anything was wrong with his car he wanted to fix it on the spot.

Several times we were stopped merely by some one raising his hand in signal for us to halt—and then unmercifully stoned until we could get under way again. And once when we were just about one jump ahead of the

rioters he suddenly stopped the car and got out to inspect a rear tire that felt as if it was going flat.

By the second day of the riots British tanks were patrolling the streets of Bombay, machine-guns were set up at likely riot centers, and British troops were everywhere. In no instance were the Indian police, or Indian soldiers, called upon to fire on fellow Indians. What killing seemed necessary was done by the British and the Anglo-Indian police officers.

I have heard a good deal of criticism of the British for their conduct of the whole affair, but honestly I don't see how they could have acted differently, under the circumstances. They may or may not be responsible for the underlying causes which led to the public outbursts.

Gandhi himself called his program one of open rebellion, and in time of war such rebellion becomes treason. Imprisonment is a light punishment. And when people take it upon themselves, because of either real or imagined wrongs, to deal in arson, pillage, and mayhem, any government must use force or withdraw from the field.

Within a week the situation seemed fairly well in hand. There were still sporadic outbursts, but general rioting was stopped. Trains were generally operating at about half-speed, but there were few new derailments or burning of important stations. Factories like the great Tata steel mills near Calcutta and the Bombay textile mills were operating again, though still at reduced speed. The crisis had passed.

There was, of course, a good deal of underground activity, efforts by minor figures in the Congress Party to carry on the Congress program. But the British dragnet had been very thorough—more than eight thousand Congress officials were arrested—and the next in line just didn't

have the imagination or the executive ability to carry on.

I knew several of these underground people in Bombay. They made a point of seeking us out, even trying to get advice, but their grasp of the situation was slight. The real strength of the Congress Party, the millions who live in the villages, was never called into play. The inept leaders tried to gain their ends by rioting in cities, which are relatively few and easily defended. Gandhi himself has always depended for his strength on the humblest dwellers in the villages. They are the masses. He never would have made the mistake of ignoring them if he had managed the campaign of obstruction himself. He would have roused the villagers, and there aren't enough police and soldiery in India to begin to place even a tiny garrison in every village. But Gandhi was put out of action before he could start such a campaign. I believe it would have been his next step.

The situation was bad enough as it was. But two great dangers were averted which would have made it far worse. The one was averted by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, whose name means Little, and the other by President Roosevelt, who is sometimes referred to as Mr. Big.

The worst kinds of disturbances in India are those of a communal nature, between Hindus and Mohammedans. There is no trouble in those parts so serious as what is often referred to there as cow-music trouble.

The cow is a sacred beast to the Hindus. They don't just refrain from eating them. A Hindu policeman won't even prod a cow if it holds up traffic by lying down in the middle of the road. But the Mohammedans sacrifice cows. Riots have been started by Mohammedans leading a cow past a Hindu temple on the way to the sacrificial altar.

Now the Hindus like music, and they like it played for their parades. But Mohammedans are taught to think their mosques are defiled by the playing of music in the vicinity. Riots have been started by flute-playing Hindus parading past a Mohammedan mosque.

That's cow-music communal trouble, and it's been a bloody business at times. The Mohammedans are better fighters, but the Hindus are far more numerous. It doesn't always take a cow or music to blow into flame the ancient fires of communal distrust and hatred. Almost anything can do it.

One of the chief fears of the British during the Gandhi riots was that Hindu hysteria might incite Congress zealots to attempt to force Mohammedans to join in the violent protests against British rule.

But Jinnah spoke his mind loud and strong, and his followers listened. He told them this business was none of theirs but was a quarrel strictly between the Congress Party and the British. He ordered the Mohammedans to keep hands off, even under provocation.

And his power is such that even though some Moslem shops were stoned in an effort to make them close up like the Hindu shops, the Mohammedans kept their tempers.

The second possibility which would have seriously complicated the situation was involvement of the Americans in India. The Congress fully expected at least American moral support, and many of its followers believed they could count on actual physical support against the British. They had wrongly construed Colonel Louis Johnson's friendship for Nehru as a virtual guaranty of such support. As they learned that America thoroughly disapproved of the Gandhi rebellion when Britain was faced with foreign war and quite possibly Japanese invasion of India, they were disillusioned and angry.

140 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

There seemed to me to be a general British attitude that since we were Britain's allies, and had fighting men in India as allies of Britain's fighting men there, we were as much involved as Britain in anything that threatened our joint war effort.

President Roosevelt, however, took an opposite view. He set a hands-off policy, and the American officers carried out his wishes with efficiency and despatch. There were thousands of American soldiers in India at the time, but during those riots a stranger would never have suspected it. They were kept off the streets as much as possible during the day, and they were all in quarters before dark. As a result I don't know of a single instance in which Americans became embroiled in the disturbances, though on occasion the provocation was great.

After the rioting subsided we had some pleasant days in Bombay. We spent most of the evenings with the Stimsons; we finally got those pancakes and sausages from the Pennsylvania Dutch woman, and we roamed about the city absorbing knowledge and sticky heat and lemon squashes.

The last of the cheddar was fast disappearing at the Gymkana. The six months that I had been told would limit my assignment were almost up. My thoughts turned back to America, to my girls, to Bett. It was an interlude of pleasant dreaming.

I was awakened from that dream by a cable asking me how I would like to go to China for awhile. The office in New York had got one of those mysterious tips that big doings were afoot. I replied that I could practically guaranty that nothing of moment was going to happen in China for months, that reporters were confined to Chungking and Kunming where they just rewrote communiqués,

that the only news a reporter could get in China just then was the news that he'd got another jag of malaria, and that anyway how about that six months stuff. I never got an answer to that cable.

But a few days later I got another message from New York saying how about going to Russia. Jim Brown, the I.N.S. man there, was sick, and they wanted to get him out at once. I'd never been to Russia. I wired the office I'd go and then sent Bett this cable:

"Starting home few days now but making slight detour via Russia."

She still jokes me about that "slight detour." She'd been to Russia, and she knew a journey in there was no detour.

I went back to Delhi to make arrangements, and they took me almost a month. But it was a pleasant month. There was no real news. Communiqués, interviews, routine press conferences, and a very pleasant existence at the Cecil.

I couldn't see that the riots, the rebellion, had made any difference to the bureaucratic army that did its nine-to-five shift in the South Block. These clerks-in-uniform gave me a terrible feeling of depression. They were so reminiscent, sitting on the broad terrace of the Cecil sipping their whisky *chota* pegs, of the officers and civil servants at the Raffles and the Swimming Club in Singapore.

And I couldn't see that our forces in New Delhi were any better. They led a nine-to-five existence with the Imperial as their social background. They sat in the Imperial bar instead of on the Cecil terrace, and they drank *burra* pegs, which are big drinks, instead of *chota* pegs, which are little ones. They still seemed to be doing little more than what my soldier friends of the Assam air out-post called kissing the cat.

142 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

That American force in India then, with the exception of a few flight crews and ground crews, seemed to exist chiefly in order to support itself in uselessness. But actually it was the broad foundation of a pyramid of fighting forces. Since then the pyramid of fighting air personnel has been supplied and rests firmly on that foundation of supply and office workers.

It was during these days of waiting that I met Ronnie Monson again, the Australian reporter I had known in France. He'd had a bad time after Dunkirk. He'd got to England in the evacuation, but Stella had been caught in Paris. He'd finally got her across, and they'd stayed in England for a while. But then he was sent to the Western Desert, and here he was in India. He told me he had a son thirteen months old he'd never seen.

Ronnie is my idea of the typical Australian, and they are the most direct people I have ever met. All the good hotels were overfilled, even the tents in the compounds, when he arrived in Delhi, so he got a room in a nasty little two-story inn on Connaught Circus in New Delhi. All the upstairs rooms opened from a veranda that ran along the whole front of the building.

His first night in town Ronnie returned to his hotel rather late, and when he got to his room the key wouldn't fit the lock. As though that were the perfectly natural thing to do, he just raised one foot and kicked the door in. When he switched on the light he was accosted with considerable vigor by a man suddenly aroused from sleep. It wasn't Ronnie's room. He lived next door.

It is testimony to Ronnie's natural charm that when I met him the next day he was having lunch with the British officer he had so noisily awakened. And in case you put my typical Australian down as just a bruiser who goes around kicking in doors, I would like to tell of one inci-

dent in which Ronnie had figured between the time I knew him in France and the time he came to Delhi.

He was covering the campaign in Syria, and at one time he was with an army group which was being chased very thoroughly by French troops. It became necessary to make a hurried transit of a very turbulent stream, under fire, and the only way to get across was to swim. They made it, and then discovered, from the safety of the far bank, that one of their number had been wounded and was lying helpless back on the enemy's bank.

It was one of those well-that's-certainly-too-bad-but-what-can-we-do situations. But not to Ronnie. He just jumped in and swam again across that stream, got the wounded man on his back, and made his third crossing. The British Army was thinking about decorating him for that when I last heard. They shouldn't have to think very hard.

Before I left India military affairs were looking up. The Russian Red Army was holding at Stalingrad, although the city was largely wrecked, partly occupied. General Montgomery had won the battle of El Alamein and was beginning his long drive across the Libyan desert which made the later Allied victory in Tunisia possible. The Tenth Air Force in India was getting more planes, and we were even getting a little stuff into China.

I took a train from Delhi overnight to Gwalior, there to board a British Airways plane for Karachi, Bagdad, and Basra on the long road to Russia. And so I entered my first Princely State, my one and only realm of the Rajas. The Maharaja of Gwalior was not in residence at the time, but I met the royal elephant, so I have nothing to complain about.

The reason for my introduction to the royal elephant

of Gwalior dates back to one of those get-together meetings arranged at Delhi by Sir Evelyn Wrench. This was one without rancor, because the guest of honor was His Highness the Jām Sahib of Nāwanagar, and the Jām Sahib is a jovial man to whom rancor would be repugnant.

He is Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and when I met him was newly appointed representative of India's Princely States on the United Nations War Council. He was late to our meeting, his secretary explaining that he was "in conference" with the Viceroy. He finally puffed in, a short stout man in white watered silk, the coat fastened with gold buttons inlaid with emeralds.

"I am so sorry to be late," he said, "but the last set ran ten to eight. The Viceroy was in exceptionally good form on the court to-day."

The secretary looked pained.

The Jām Sahib sat down on the forward edge of a low leather armchair, his ankles crossed. His ponderousness pushed the chair seat almost to the floor, so that he seemed to be sitting cross-legged on the carpet. I expected at any moment to see it take off and bear him magically into the sky.

Drinks were passed: whisky and soda, gimlets, and for the Jām Sahib himself a white lady. The Jām Sahib drinks nothing but white ladies, served in a delicate glass shaped something like an hourglass, but with a thicker waist and of course open at the top.

The Jām Sahib told us about his state, which is above Bombay on the west coast and has half a million inhabitants. Untouchability has been done away with there by personal example.

"There are forty thousand so-called untouchables in my country," he said, "but they are no longer untouchable. I have many of them as servants in my home. If I ignore

their untouchability no one else in the country can do anything but ignore it also. So the untouchables go to the same temples, the same schools, the same restaurants as any one else."

There have been great strides in education also in Náwanagar, he said, with a school now in every village. But the program of compulsory education has had to be abandoned.

"Many of my people," he said, "live by herds of sheep and cattle. The women are busy in the homes. The men take the beasts to market to sell. The children must act as herders on the plains. We tried compulsory education, but all these people began to emigrate to countries where the children could tend the herds. So we abandoned compulsory education."

The Jām Sahib said that the Princely States were intent now on giving every possible aid to Britain to win the war. Some one asked how long the Princely States would maintain their sovereignty in an independent India.

"Forever," he replied. "We have treaties guaranteeing us our sovereignty. The East India Company did not give us those treaties, nor did Britain ratify them because they liked us: they did it because we had a kick in us. We still have a kick in us and would resist any attempt to destroy our sovereignty."

That conversation is recorded merely in the interest of honest reporting. I don't have to agree with the Jām Sahib and neither do you. Personally I don't think the Princely States of India would retain their sovereignty until washday once British control of the country was withdrawn.

But the Jām Sahib is a pleasant man to talk to, and he has done a good job on starting the eradication of un-

touchability. Also, meeting him led to my meeting the royal elephant of Gwalior.

On the train from Delhi I bumped into a very Oxford-type Indian major on his way to America for propaganda purposes. I'd known him slightly in Delhi, and I knew he was a nephew of the Jām Sahib. Likewise he knew that the Jām Sahib had invited me to visit Nāwanagar. When I told the major that I too was leaving India and would be unable to accept his uncle's invitation, he said he would arrange for me to see something of Gwalior anyway.

So the next morning a coach and two, with gold crowns on the doors and a liveried footman standing on a step behind, called for us. We drove through the modern city of Gwalior and to the edge of a small mountain with cliff-steep sides.

On top of that minor mountain is the old fortress town of Gwalior. Into one side of the mountain nature has set what amounts to a vertical valley, and zig-zagging up the walls of that valley runs a road. Any one wishing to reach the walled crest of the mountain must go up that road. At the low end of the road we were introduced to the royal elephant.

She was a moderately mature elephant, somewhere in her fifties, and she was beautifully tattooed in pink on trunk and forelegs. There was a contraption like two park benches tied back to back on top of her, and she knelt to let us aboard. Then she started her climb, a silver bell hanging at either side proclaiming her royal progress.

That road winds up the wall of the valley, an abyss on one side and a stone cliff on the other. The cliff is carved with gigantic bas-relief figures, representing several successive civilizations. The figures of nude men and women fully fifty feet high, for instance, were chiseled there by

the Jains. That's the Indian sect from whom Gandhi borrowed his non-violence program. The few remaining Jains are still so averse to harming any form of life that they wear bandages over mouth and nose lest they bring untimely end to stray microbes.

The last part of that climbing journey is made directly along the foot of a high stone wall from which boulders could be rolled destructively upon an invading force. At the top there is a massive masonry arch, and beyond that lies the old fortress of Gwalior, with a medieval palace, timeless temples, and the shapeless wooden buildings of a progressive school for boys.

There is a stone pier jutting from the palace, and the royal elephant sidled up to it as a river steamboat maneuvers to a dock. We stepped from our park benches directly into the second story of the palace of ancient Maharajas.

The palace was built right on the mountain's edge, and from old solid shot-gun emplacements clinging to its wall you can look far over the flat country half a mile below. This, I realized at once, was in its day an impregnable fortress. And now it could be destroyed by one second-hand plane carrying a bushel basket of small bombs. Every period apparently has its Maginot Line.

10. *Asia Minor*

KARACHI, WHEN I GOT THERE next day, was little changed except that there were a lot more American soldiers than when I first arrived six months before. There were just as many camels, still contemptuously pulling carts with rubber tires. I was glad I didn't have to stay there long. Karachi is all right as a port of entry, because then you soon find that India is better than you had reason to believe from your first impression. But to have happy memories of India one should leave from Bombay.

The following night the luxurious Shatt-al-Arab Hotel at Basra was a cool oasis in a desert of endless heat. There are only two pleasant things I know about Basra: the existence of the Shatt-al-Arab, and the fact that the hotel is one minute's walking distance from the flying-boat pier.

It's another matter at the flying-boat port for Bagdad, which was my stop the next day. You climb ashore from your flying boat at Basra and walk sixty yards to your destination. You climb out of your flying boat at Habaniyah, the nearest stop for Bagdad, and drive sixty miles to your destination. If you can get a car.

One of my companions on this part of the journey was a Sikh in a Palm Beach suit and a turban of pastel green. I like Sikhs, and we became rather friendly. They're the people, you remember, who don't shave or cut their hair, make good soldiers, and are rigid refrainers from alcohol and tobacco.

This particular Sikh was the imperial entomologist of the Indian government, and he was making his first flight, his first journey out of India, to attend an international locust conference in Teheran.

Locusts were already well established as itinerant plagues in that part of the world during Old Testament days, but this was the first time that countries neighboring India had agreed to set up some sort of mutual control. My Sikh told me that India had been trying to beat the locusts for years, but little had been possible while nothing was being done in Iran or Iraq or even Afghanistan. Now at last they were getting together.

There was an airport hotel at Habaniyah, but it had been stripped clean in riots of the previous year and there was nothing to eat, nothing to sleep on but the floor. For twenty dollars apiece the Sikh locust doctor and I hired a car to take us into Bagdad, wait overnight, and bring us back in the morning.

The road was a desert track winding between rolling dunes. It was very hot, and the Sikh dozed. His pistachio turban slipped down over his nose, and so I found that Sikhs secure their long hair by twisting it into a knob at the top of their head and holding it there with a little wooden skewer.

Despite this discovery I was bored. The road was rough, the car was ancient and uncomfortable, the heat was intense, there was no scenery, and the only people to be seen were occasional villainous Arabs riding the rumps

of little asses. We came to a nondescript yellowish stream crossed by a makeshift wooden bridge. I poked the driver in the back and asked him what river this was. He gave a grunting sound I had to ask him to repeat. He turned around and shouted:

“Ooph-ratees.”

Ooph-ratees. Why, this was the Euphrates! This was the river of gold. Beyond a little way must lie the Tigris. And between them, not far from here, was the site of the Garden of Eden. Beyond that, the site of the vanished harlot city of Babylon, whose garland of hanging gardens still blooms. Straight ahead lay Bagdad. Bagdad of the Arabian Nights. Any one of these villainous Arabs on their little asses could be one of Ali Baba's two-score scum.

All this lay about me. Through this I rode. And I was bored. It's been a long time since I've been able to blush, but I swear I felt a prickling under my skin that was good enough to serve. I was disgusted with myself. I shook the Sikh awake so he wouldn't miss anything either.

When we came to the Tigris it was a little more impressive than the Ooph-ratees. At least it had a high-arching steel bridge. And from the top of that bridge Bagdad is beautiful. Bagdad is a city of mosques, and each one has many minarets, all in that lovely faded blue I have seen nowhere but in Eastern pottery. From there Bagdad is beautiful. From nowhere else is it beautiful.

The city itself is a sinister place of dirty crowded streets and head-rope Arab pedestrians, no one of whom shows any reason in face or demeanor why he should be outside of jail. I never saw a more evil-looking people, unless it is the pirate porters who stand at the foot of the terrace steps at Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo.

Our driver took us to the Tigris Palace Hotel, which sounded fine and from outside looked no worse than a

third-rate hotel in a small American city. But its appearance was deceptive. I don't know any American hotel, of whatever rate, that would crowd seven cots into one double room. Yet that was my lot, and I paid the equivalent of about ten dollars for it. There was no bath either in the room or down the hall. But in a tiny dungeon on the ground floor there were a couple of concrete footprints....

Our driver called for us early in the morning, but I had been ready for him long before. From the bridge over the Tigris I looked back on Bagdad and the early sun bathed the faded blue minarets in loveliness. The city looked beautiful. But I knew better.

From Habaniyah we flew that day to Teheran, capital of the kingdom of Iran, land of Alexander the Great, of Shah Pahlevi the Little. My credentials for Russia were waiting for me.

Teheran is in its fashion a colorful city, but I think we gave it a little dash of extra color that day. My Sikh in his pastel green turban, I in my shirt and shorts and wide-brimmed pith helmet, were as strange a sight in that city as a couple of Eskimos in parkas would be, strolling down Biscayne Boulevard in Miami.

I registered at the Ferdowsie Hotel in the middle of town and found that Mary Brock of N.B.C. was staying there. I found her in her room having tea, and for a little while we were back in Paris, back in that fantastic walk-up apartment on the left bank where she had burned her leg on the coal stove dancing with Ray.

Then several men came in, among them Jim Brown fresh from Moscow, the man I was to replace. He had the deceptive look of health that high blood-pressure gives, but he was very tired: I wondered how Russia's winter

snows would treat my body after six months of baking in India's sun. Among the others were Eddy Gilmore of The Associated Press, on vacation from Moscow, and Edmund Stevens of the *Christian Science Monitor*, who had lived for years in Russia and now was having inexplicable trouble getting back.

We all went out to dinner at a Caucasian restaurant and loaded up on caviar from the southern Caspian, which is the very best, and on Persian vodka, which is the very worst.

I arrived in Teheran at a rather critical time. The German armies were in the upper Caucasus, and it was only sensible to imagine that they might come tearing down between the Caspian and the Black Sea into Iran. The immediate danger of a break-through from across Suez seemed at least averted by the Montgomery drive in Libya, but there were rumors of a possible Axis smash through Turkey.

The old Shah had been driven out by the British, and out-and-out Axis agents had been scooped up. But there was still strong Axis sympathy in the country, especially among the army. Russia had taken the upper third of the country under virtual military occupation. Britain was established in the capital and indeed all the central portion. Americans were coming in pretty thick down on the Persian Gulf. Add to that a definite "Polish problem" created by thousands of Polish women and children and some men, released from Russia for temporary repatriation somewhere in Africa, and for the time being the wards of the American Red Cross.

There was a technical blackout and a theoretical curfew. But the night was loud with the blare of night-club bands. And the days were prophetic with the cries of peasants who had planted their own fields with opium

poppies instead of wheat and now fought at food-store windows for round flaps of unleavened bread.

Into this mess had been dropped half a dozen American "advisers," who were supposed to straighten everything out and make the country safe, healthy, and happy overnight with help from no one. The strange thing is that they have done it, not overnight, but in a surprisingly short time and against tremendous odds.

It is perhaps unfair to mention some of these men and not all of them, because they all strove like giants and achieved like magicians. But I didn't even get to know all of them. Suffice it to say that what I say of those I do mention applies also to the others.

One of the principal problems was the matter of municipal and country police. Any country which is in danger of invasion, and which meantime must be used as a highroad of war supplies, should have very excellent police. The police of Iran were paid about six dollars a month, were so illiterate they couldn't make out a simple parking ticket, and because of their starvation wages were wide open to bribes from any source.

To reorganize the police forces the Persian government requested the services of Lyman Stephen Timmerman of New York, who has helped reorganize a score of American police departments, and Colonel Norman H. Schwartzkopf, former head of the New Jersey State Police and a key figure in the investigation of the Lindbergh kidnap case.

Timmy got the city police forces, something over fifty of them, and Col. Schwartzkopf took the rural police, aided by Lieutenant Colonel "Dan" Boone and Captain Bill Preston. Pay raises were the first move, and weeding out of illiterates and the dishonest the second. No one would ever recognize those police forces now, and Amer-

154 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

ican lend-lease material is rolling over Persian roads with a freedom from banditry never before known in Iran. Rolling into Russia.

Most of the America advisers, I found, were living at the Hotel Darband, about ten miles up in the hills out of town, so I moved up there. I couldn't have done that except for Timmy.

One new American automobile of a type that ordinarily sells at home for about fifteen hundred dollars had somehow drifted into Teheran about the time I got there and had been snapped up for eighteen thousand dollars. The standard price for tires was six hundred dollars per tire.

The taxis of Teheran are terrible rattletraps, often with wood benches instead of upholstered seats, and none with any glass in the windows. But because of tire and replacement costs, the rates are such that I could not have lived at the Darband if I had had to use taxis twice a day. Timmy let me ride down in the morning and back in the afternoon with him in his police department car, however, so I was able to live there.

In that way I got to know Phil Kidd, the lease-lend man, the men of the military mission, and Joseph P. Sheridan, who had the simple little job of feeding a people already on the turbulent edge of starvation.

Sherry is worth more words than I can give him here. A former New York City journalistic leg man, he settled in Cairo after the first war and became one of the most important agents in the Middle East for American food companies. His business collapsed with this war, and he took on the job of feeding the Iranians. With what, was up to him.

He's a big, bluff American of Irish extraction with enthusiasm which is overflowing. Everything is superlative. His guests are always the most important people in the

country, their wives the most beautiful women. In describing a dinner he went to once he said it started off with "absolutely beautiful soup." He was Beautiful Soup Sheridan from then on.

But there was no nonsense about the job he was doing. When I arrived in Iran there was a good deal of rough-and-tumble going on at the food-shop windows, and reports were coming in of serious bread riots in the outlying districts. But when I passed through Iran again, on the way out from Russia, the food crisis was past. How Sherry got hoarded wheat out of the ground, traded for wheat with the British for something else, wangled additional supplies from lease-lend or the Red Cross is a mystery. But do it he did.

It may have been the change in temperature from India's daily 120 degrees to Teheran's cool days and chilly evenings, or it may have been the change in altitude from India's dusty plains to Iran's mountains. But for one reason or another I came down with a nice case of strep throat and so met another of the most important American advisers.

That was Lieutenant Colonel A. A. Niewirth, Medical Corps, U.S.A., loaned to the Persian government to reorganize their sanitation. He didn't really have to reorganize it; there wasn't any. The broad streets of the modern part of Teheran were bordered with open sewers. The narrow cross-streets just had one open sewer running down the middle.

When the weather was cool these sewers were flushed periodically. When it was hot, water flowed in them throughout the day, and they became the focal point of the city's social life. Old folk would straddle chairs across them and chat while enjoying the cooling of the air as it passed over the running water. Children coasted down

156 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

them on their bellies. Women washed their hair in the water. Beggars washed their feet. And peddlers of drinking water filled their tank carts from the same source. There was a good deal of disease in Teheran.

I took my aching throat to Dr. Niewirth, and he diagnosed it.

"You're off to the hospital for at least two weeks," he told me. "And no Russia for you this winter."

I went to the hospital, run by an Iranian doctor named Sahli who had studied in America and whose wife came from East Orange, New Jersey. The Sahlis were having troubles of their own. A new hospital building wasn't ready when it should have been, and the old one was entirely inadequate. They couldn't get trained help. They were in an awful fix. And so was I. I was rather pleased on my first morning not to be awakened at five in hospital fashion to have my face washed. But I was a little surprised when it was not washed at all. After five days. . . .

After five days I put on my clothes, paid my bill, and said good-by to the Sahlis. I knew that they were struggling against almost hopeless odds to achieve the hospital of their dreams, and I'm sure they'll realize those dreams.

I went back to the Darband, where the beds were soft and clean and the bathroom with the big tub connected with my room.

On Dr. Niewirth's advice I took it easy, though the sulfa had knocked the streptococci out of my throat. I used to lie on the balcony outside our rooms with Eddy Gilmore, soaking up sunshine and getting advice from him about what to buy for Russia. All buying in Teheran is done on the Oriental haggle system, which is exhausting, so I hired a percentage buyer to get everything for me. He cheated me, of course, but it was worth it. And he did have imagination. All on his own he got me a cylin-

dricol Cossack hat of Persian lamb which did very well in Russia, though it almost stopped traffic on Fifth Avenue when I got home.

It was during this period also that I found out about the money black market which flourishes on Russia's border. Russian rubles, theoretically, don't exist outside Russia. No one is allowed to take any rubles out of Russia, and no one is allowed to take any in. That's necessary because there is no real value to a ruble; it's just an arbitrary value fixed by the government.

The pegged "exchange rate"—though there is no exchange—is six rubles to the dollar. The Russian government allows diplomatic and journalistic foreigners, however, to buy them in Russia at twelve to the dollar. My professional buyer whispered to me one day that he could get me all the rubles I wanted at a hundred and fifty to the dollar.

"In big bills," he whispered, "so it will make a very little package. You could strap 100,000 rubles to the small of your back where it would never show through your clothes. When you get to Russia you will be rich."

"And," said Eddy, who was with us, "if you get caught smuggling that money into Russia, you spend the next four hundred and fifty years in prison on bread and water. After the first hundred years they toast the bread if your behavior has been good."

I didn't buy any black-market rubles, but I did borrow five hundred from one of the American reporters the customs man had apparently overlooked at the border as he came out. I didn't want to break the rules at all, but that was the only way I could figure out to have any money for hotels and meals on my way to Moscow. At least the Russian government was not cheated, since I used money that had been bought in Russia at the official price.

158 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

We had good food at the Darband—Caspian caviar, good meat and vegetables, and those delicious melons that come only from Ispahan. Just below us on the mountainside was the luxurious summer palace of the Shah. Just above us on the bare volcanic slopes were miserable peasants lucky to get a scrap of abominable sandy bread.

No country can be safe to live in for any one while such inequalities exist. But our American advisers are on the way: they've made a start. Some countries may be set back a thousand years by this war. I think Iran stands a good chance of being advanced a thousand years. And it will be largely due to the Americans who serve there now.

11. Russia

GOING IN FROM IRAN, you enter Russia long before you get to the border. You enter it by passing through the guarded gate of the barbed-wire fence around the Teheran airport. The gate is guarded by a flat-faced, slant-eyed Mongolian from east of the Urals. His bayonet is two inches from your stomach as he reads your Russian credentials. It then takes up position two inches from your back as you are herded to the corner of a hangar, where you wait until your plane is ready.

The Russians took over the upper third of Iran after the hullabaloo about German "tourists" that ended with the old Shah seeking happier climes. The Russians took the top third, and the British took the middle third. The lower third, fronting on the Persian Gulf, was left more or less like the empty chair at table for an unexpected guest. Except in this case I think it was pretty well known, or at least assumed, who would sit in that chair. There are a lot of chairs like that around the world that seem by some strange coincidence to be an exact fit for Uncle Sam's lanky frame.

When Britain and Russia moved into Iran there was a

treaty signed at Teheran which pledged return of full sovereignty at some unspecified post-war date. But for the duration at least the reins were pretty well taken out of Persian hands. And while I was there it was sometimes difficult to tell whether Russia or Britain was driving the hackney cab of state. Sometimes it seemed as if Russia must have hold of one rein and Britain the other.

The part of Iran that Russia took as a buffer against the southern Caucasus came right down to the outskirts of Teheran. The airport is situated in those outskirts. It was being used by Russia, Britain, and America, and under Iranian management it was a good deal of a mess.

The story is that the British decided to take it over and run it right for all concerned. The time for taking over was to be at eleven o'clock one Monday morning. Apparently the Russians weren't taken in on this plan, but Russia has ways of obtaining information. And when the British showed up promptly at eleven o'clock on that Monday morning, so the tale goes, they found that the Russians had taken the airport over at ten.

This story may not be exact in all details. But when I was in Iran the Russians were certainly in charge of that airport, and the British had to toe the line there the same as everybody else. So did the Americans. I saw a nice example of that later, when I had left Russia and was on my way home.

The American Army Transport Command had just extended its line to Teheran from Basra. I saw the first plane in. That was the plane I was to leave on on the following day, and I had gone to the field to complete arrangements.

The American crew piled out and went to the field office to check in. Immediately a Russian sentry began pacing back and forth in front of the plane. Pretty soon the pilot strolled over to the plane and reached for the

door, intending merely to climb aboard and get his little overnight bag. Immediately strange Siberian commands crackled against his back, and he turned to face a bayonet.

"*Niet*," said the squat man from Asiatic Russia, and the American pilot didn't need any dictionary to know that that meant "No you don't." A bayonet is a wonderful language teacher.

So the American pilot went meekly back to the office to get written permission in Russian to take his own pajamas and toothbrush out of his own plane.

That shows a little what I meant when I said you don't have to cross the border to get into Russia. You get a fine introduction to it right on that Teheran airport.

The day I left Teheran for Moscow I drove to the airport in a windowless, rattletrap taxi with Eddy Gilmore. At the gate Eddy shouldered my heavy duffle-bag, and I took my typewriter and two small cloth handbags. We piled them up at the corner of a hangar, where the sentry indicated we could wait.

Eddy was interested in these sentries. It amused him that here, so far behind the lines, they wore coal-scuttle steel helmets.

"They don't generally wear them at the front, you know," he told me. "Too cold. They wear fur caps with the visor and ear-muffs down. I guess maybe steel comes into it, too. You could make a lot of guns out of the steel it would take to outfit an army the size of theirs with tin bonnets."

I remembered that later, after I got back to America and heard some armchair generals call certain Russian news pictures phony because it showed Red Army soldiers attacking in fur caps.

"How can the Russians think we'd be stupid enough to swallow that stuff?" I was asked. "It's the worst fake

162 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

yet. Imagine soldiers running head-on into rifle and machine-gun fire with no head protection but a hollowed-out rabbit!"

What we need in this war is more first-hand reporters like Eddy Gilmore and fewer wiseacres who have seen a movie.

Eddy had an appointment in town, so he drove away in the ramshackle taxi. Despite its dilapidation it seemed to me that rakish motorized hack swaggered on its six-hundred-dollar tires as it bounced back into the carefree streets of Teheran from the unsmiling discipline of the Russianized airport.

My plane, a Russian-built Douglas transport with big red stars on the wings, was fueling about fifty yards out on the field. The door was finally opened, and a whistle was blown. Ready to go. And here was another Russian touch. No one to help with the baggage. Every man his own pack animal. I bent double under my duffle-bag, balanced myself with the typewriter and handbags, and tottered toward the plane.

I hadn't been excited about the journey up to then. But suddenly that strange little shiver ran over my spine, the way it had when I got that "go where action hottest" assignment in India, the way it had riding over the desert into Bagdad, the way it has done often enough to keep me in an otherwise unremunerative business for twenty-five years.

In an hour I would be in Russian skies. I was going to see Russia at a moment which would forever be recorded in history books. I might not find out any secrets; but I was going to sit at the feet of the Sphinx—a more enigmatic Sphinx than ever brooded in Egypt's desert.

I counted and appraised my fellow passengers as the engines roared and we taxied down the runway. There

were eight Russians, all in uniform, and one very fresh-faced English captain certainly not beyond his early twenties.

We wheeled abruptly at the runway's end, strained as though against invisible tethers, bumped down the runway with increasing speed, and lifted upward toward mountains crowned with snow. On their far side lay mystery, adventure, the unknown and perhaps unknowable. On their far side lay Russia.

It was cold over those mountains, but comfortable because there were still regular adjustable airplane seats in that plane. Then the southern shore of the Caspian rose toward us, slowly and unevenly, as though being pulled up hand over hand by a lazy stevedore, and it was warm again.

The lower Caucasus looks smugly prosperous even in wartime, even in wintertime. The fields and orchards are neatly delineated, and the earth has that indefinable quality of fertility. It was hard to believe that elsewhere in this same country a wind as cruel as a jagged knife was driving snow in topsy-turvy exile from Siberia.

We flew at no more than two thousand feet, following the western coastline, and the roadbed of the air was straight and level. The country below was pleasant but without variety. I turned my attention to the other passengers. But there was little more variety there, at least among the Russians.

They were of indeterminate age, probably in their thirties. They wore the warm but rather bunched uniform of the Red Army. And their ironed-out, Slavic faces were colorless, expressionless. It was like looking at a stone wall and wondering if behind its impassive depth murder might be going on, or love-making, or nothing at all.

The young English captain, however, was practically

164 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

throbbing with suppressed emotions, which only his national reserve kept from spilling all over his face. He pressed his forehead against the window to keep from missing anything below, and his face was pink with excitement. I wondered if he had ever before traveled beyond the confines of his little isle. He had all the earmarks of a man on whom it has suddenly burst for the first time that the big world is real and not just a vague shadow encompassing the brightness of his own little sphere.

Off in the distance the ground darkened as though marred by a leafless forest. We began to come down in gentle cushioned steps. Such a descent always reminds me of the mixed sensation of pleasure and fear with which as a small child I used to slide carefully down a carpeted stairway on my seat.

The leafless forest took form and turned into a vast oil field with wooden derricks thicker than I have ever seen them in Oklahoma. It was a derrick army on parade. The derrick soldiers stood in regiments upon the plain. They were deployed across low hills. They stood knee-deep in the coastal waters of the Caspian. This was Baku.

The airport at Baku is in the center of the oil field, and we came in to a perfect landing. I never had reason later, though I was in a couple of tight spots in Russian planes, to change my first impression that the Red Army pilot is a very expert flier. We were flagged to our parking post in a long line of Russian Douglasses, and the plane door was opened. I set foot on Russian soil for the first time, and I felt a definite thrill of excitement. As a rule I can take new countries or let them alone. But even before the winter offensive of 1942 had started, Russia had become, or so I had gathered from despatches and radio accounts,

exactly what a country at war ought to be—a country at war all over. I had seen so many countries half at war, pretending to be at war, at war in name only.

As I stood under the wing watching the customs men go aboard the plane, I noticed that the uniformed figure which had flagged us in was a woman. She wore the boots and breeches, the lumpy overcoat, the fur cap with earmuffs tied over the top, of a Russian soldier. She was a Russian soldier, assigned to this behind-the-lines duty. The man she replaced was probably at Stalingrad, perhaps had died there.

The customs men began pawing around among the baggage, and finally one of them beckoned me to go back in the plane. I pointed out my things, and he chose one of the little cloth zipper bags for inspection. There wasn't much in there beyond a lot of Persian cigarets and two pairs of women's shoes.

Some misinformed friend had told me that the best way to make friends and influence people in Russia was to give them such things as presents for their wives or daughters or what not. Sort of like wampum for the Indians in early America. I found out soon enough that you can't buy friendship in Russia even' as much as you can in some other countries, and that isn't much. I finally left them as a parting token of esteem for the chambermaid in my Moscow hotel.

The customs man didn't seem to think there was anything peculiar in my having such equipment, however, even though one pair of those shoes had red heels and rhinestone buckles. He chalked my bags in the way of customs men everywhere, and I joined the English Captain under the wing.

Apparently his very Bond Street uniform gave him immunity. As the only uniform I had was the sleazy shirt,

166 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

shorts, and bush jacket of the Indian plains, I was wearing civilian clothes and had to take the consequences. At least I was relieved that the officials had not brought up the matter of money. The five hundred rubles I had borrowed burned like a guilty conscience in my back pocket. I had a feeling that they were calling out "Here I am," in a much louder voice than Gandhi had thus called to me from the floor of his Wardha hut.

An old rattletrap bus clattered up, and we piled in for the fifteen-mile ride to town. The Russians waited until the English Captain and I got in, though they gave no sign that it was for us they waited. I am sure, now that I know Russians better than I did then, that this was a gesture of politeness on their part to guests in their country. But so far as the evidence went, they didn't even see us at all. It had been like that in the plane, too. I was to find that that was general in Russia, and to become accustomed to it. But at first it is strangely disconcerting, as though you suddenly found that you were walking invisible among your fellow men, immaterial and very irrelevant.

It certainly wasn't that our Russian companions on that journey weren't observing. They saw everything they wanted to see. They spotted a gusher quick enough when it came into sight as a waving dark plume on the horizon.

Our road wound through the derricks. Below our springless bus it was very bumpy, and it was puddled with black oil. The oil sprayed out from under our tires like frayed remnants from a rainbow.

Baku is an old field, the gas long since exhausted. The wooden derricks are all equipped with walking-beam pumps which seesaw with almost hypnotic monotony. A gusher was evidently an unusual occurrence, because it

caused a fire-cracker splutter of pleased surprise from the Russians.

The Englishman gazed at it with interest, too, but without comment. I only found out later that he was completely mystified by this phenomenon and very curious as to its meaning. But his reserve prevented him from baring his ignorance before a stranger.

The city of Baku is more pleasing to the eye than the adjacent oil field, though it is no Mardi Gras setting itself. There is an oval harbor, and the city rises from one end of it in semicircular terraces.

I have heard that in peacetime and in spring Baku is beautiful. But I was there in winter and in war, and the town was mantled in cold grayness. I was soon to see grayer cities, and grimmer ones, but this was my first Russian town, and first impressions are sharp.

The Intourist Hotel is on a main thoroughfare skirting the harbor. The lobby is dark and cold and smells of cabbage cooked too long. We carried our own bags in from the bus and waited for some one to take notice of us. I was homesick for the Taj Mahal. Rustam would have been a comfort.

A boy of nineteen or twenty took form out of the shadows and smiled with a dark shyness.

"To what nation do you belong?" he asked, and explained: "So that I know what language to speak."

The English captain stiffened like a frightened horse. It had evidently never occurred to him that he might be mistaken for anything but an Englishman. His pride of nation was enormous, and it seemed almost an affront to him even to suggest that he might be one of those un-English people whom he had always lumped with unconscious disparagement under the term of foreigners.

168 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

It hadn't yet occurred to him that since leaving home he had become a foreigner himself.

"I am British," he said, and the Intourist boy looked at me.

"American?" he asked, and I nodded. "I thought so. We used to have many American tourists here. I was very young then, but I remember them well. They always had a very good time."

He led us then up dark stairs to adjoining rooms on the second floor. And they were very good rooms, small but well appointed. I had a bedroom and sitting-room and bath, and there was a little balcony overlooking the harbor.

The Intourist boy said I could have late lunch if I liked, and I realized that we had had nothing in the plane and I was very hungry. Also, I was anxious to see if all the tales I had been told about Russian meals were really true. Eddy had been pretty gruesome about it.

I asked what there was to eat, expecting to be told that there was only what Eddy spoke of feelingly as cold, dead fish.

"There is caviar," the boy told me, "and lamb with beets and potatoes, bread and butter, cheese and coffee, and pirojny."

"Sold," I told him. "Even the pirojny, whatever that may be. Will you show me where the dining-room is?"

"I think you will prefer to have your lunch in your room," he said.

"Thanks, but I'd rather eat in the dining-room with the other folks. I know they won't talk to me, or even look at me; I've learned that much about Russia. But at least I can look at them. I suppose there's no rule against my listening to the clatter of their knives and forks. Even that would be sort of companionable."

"You will prefer to have your lunch in your room," the boy repeated, and I caught a note of quiet finality in his voice, despite the outward politeness.

At the door he turned and said: "You like wodka?"

"No," I said grumpily, "I don't like wodka. I think wodka is the lousiest liquor ever invented by man to torture himself. I think wodka is a just punishment visited by an angry God on a people who deny His existence.

"But," I hastily added as the youth turned to leave, "I will take all the wodka I am permitted to have. It is warming."

I had taken my coat off when I entered the room, but I suddenly realized that I was cold. The radiator was about as warm as a hot-water bottle after a long winter's night. I put my coat back on and donned my Cossack cap. That was almost the last time I ever took my coat off while I was in Russia, even in bed.

I was unpacking the few things I would need for the night when the Intourist boy came back with an elderly waitress bearing a tray. There was a paper-covered copy of *King of Arabia*, the story of Ibn Saud, tossed on the table, and the boy pounced on it.

"Are you through reading this?" he asked. "It is impossible to get any English books here. I would be very grateful. . . ."

I hadn't finished the book, and it is a very good one, and besides that I wasn't at all sure that the N.K.V.D. would approve my disseminating among the Soviet citizenry literature filled with accounts of civil war and rebellion.

But I did want to make some amends for my rudeness about vodka when I was angry at being forced to eat in my own room like a bad child. Also, I thought, he probably

170 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

belongs to the N.K.V.D. himself. Those cheek-bone red spots may explain why he isn't in the army, but that doesn't mean he wouldn't be called on to serve in other ways. And if he is an agent set to spy on foreigners I might just as well give this book up as have it seized from me later.

Also again, those five hundred rubles I had borrowed were still very heavy in my back pocket, and growing heavier. I hadn't yet been out from under watchful eyes for one minute since setting foot in Russia. If I was called on to produce some money, and did so, I would have to admit I had brought it in with me. So I thought it was very cheap if I could buy a friend at court by just giving him a fifty-cent book. I gave him the book.

The lunch wasn't bad. In fact, it was even better than the boy had represented it, because there was soup, too. I had thought it strange, considering the all-pervading smell of the hotel, when he told me what vegetables I could have and didn't mention cabbage. Now I found it in the soup. In fact, the soup was cabbage, just dished up in the water it was boiled in.

The lamb was very tough and gristly, but I think it really was lamb, or rather, mutton. The fried potatoes were all right, and the beets were beets. They weren't our small and sweet variety of course, but I had scarcely expected that. They were chunks hacked from those cannon-ball beet-roots they make sugar out of, and T.N.T.

The butter and cheese were good on heavy black bread, and the coffee, though certainly not coffee, was warm and sweet. The pirojny turned out to be a little piece of pastry, quite good. And the vodka I had given such a bad character so recently was a pleasant glow inside me, as though a lamp with a red shade had been lighted there.

And now that we've got far enough into Russia to use

a few Russian words, like pirojny and wodka, as the Russians pronounce it, I might as well state my system for spelling foreign words originally built from an alphabet of letters different from ours. There can't be any one right way to put them into our alphabet. It's just a matter of phonetics, of ear for sound. So I spell them the way they sound to me.

After lunch I wondered what to do next. It seemed as though a long day was behind me, but it was only three o'clock, and the plane didn't leave until six the next morning.

My only book was gone, so reading was out. I would have liked to go next door and talk to the English Captain, but I wasn't sure that I would be welcome. So I lugged a chair out on the balcony, where it was warmer than indoors and not so redolent of cabbage, and settled down to watch the street and the harbor. There wasn't much to watch: a few ships dozing on the water and a few people, mostly women, walking purposefully along the sidewalks.

Suddenly the English Captain appeared at the door from my room. He had come in without knocking, or perhaps I hadn't heard his knock and he'd come in anyway. At any rate there he was, smiling in the friendliest fashion, and evidently as anxious as I was for some one to talk to.

Having to eat in his room had bothered him as it had me, but he'd gone one step beyond me and figured out the reason for it. He said he'd seen reports about what Russian civilians had to eat, and they didn't jibe with what we had had.

"I don't know why they should feed us any better than their own people," he said. "But they did. And I suppose we had to eat our special fare in solitude, so the Rus-

sians in the dining-room wouldn't see how much better we were eating than they were."

Now that was a pretty remarkable piece of pure thinking for a man who, as I learned a little later, had never been out of his own country until he left it a few days before by plane. It was cold logic, and absolutely correct. I never did eat in a general dining-room while I was in Russia, and that was the reason. But I never did find out why the Russians went to the trouble of giving us foreigners preferential treatment in the matter of food. There were many other things that made us feel that they had a decidedly low opinion of us. Perhaps it was merely a mixture of generosity and scorn which made them give us extra rations because they considered us poor things who couldn't stand the privations which they accepted as normal. If that's it, they were just about right as far as I was concerned. If the Moscow menu had been any scantier than it was, I for one would have come out of there a skeleton instead of merely a semi-skeleton with a nice case of scurvy. Yet the Muscovites had far less and seemed to thrive on it. There may be people closer to supermen, but I haven't met them.

The English Captain thought it would be nice to take a stroll around town. But he didn't know if such freedom was permitted. The lunch-in-your-room-and-like-it episode suggested that perhaps we were supposed to stay there until called for. I said I didn't know either, but I knew how to find out. We could just try, and see what happened.

We walked down the dark corridor side by side, and I know that for me at least it was an effort not to tiptoe. After all, we have been spoon-fed for twenty-five years now with terrible tales of the O.G.P.U. and its successor, the N.K.V.D.

The only way to find out how much of it is nonsense—and a great deal of it is—is to test it out just as the English Captain and I did in our supreme and collective ignorance.

We went silently down the carpeted stairs and past the reception desk where two dim figures bent over ledgers lighted by tiny lamps. I remember thinking then, in one of those parentheses that float through cluttered heads, that there should be a wonderful field for oculists in Russia after the war.

At the swing doors no one had shouted at us. No hand had fallen on our shoulders, though mine at least were braced. We pushed through into a black entry way and fumbled for the outer doors. There were two sets of doors, set well apart, for blackout purposes. Between them was this little chamber of absolute blackness, like a sand-hog's decompressing room. The hazy sunshine of outdoors seemed brilliant to our expanded pupils.

We crossed the street and turned left along the embankment toward the center of town. The sidewalk shortly left the street and wound gently along the harbor through a little park where a few women huddled on benches joggling baby carriages.

Having shared the experience of our flight from the N.K.V.D., even an N.K.V.D. which it now seemed had no interest in us at all, we felt like old friends, and all restraint disappeared. The Captain told me of his flight from England. It was his first departure from home, and he was to be stationed in Moscow, with the intelligence service, I gathered, though he didn't say so outright. He asked about the gusher we had seen and said he'd never seen an oil field before.

Just for fun I did a little intelligence work myself then. I described to him the route by which he had flown from

174 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

England, a route I didn't know was in operation yet, a route which if it was in operation was unquestionably a pretty deep secret.

"What makes you think I came that way?" he asked, and I could see he was worried.

I reminded him that if he had come by any of the known and more roundabout air routes he would have passed through several oil fields. They would no longer be new to him.

I hadn't meant to be cruel, and I was sorry I had been a show-off Sherlock when the blood rushed up into his face in the deepest blush I have ever seen.

"By Jove," he said, "I might have said that to any one. I might have given away the show. I might have got some of our own chaps shot out of the sky. Stupid, what? But a good lesson."

There was a little diversion then which covered up the embarrassment of the moment, though it was to result in my poor Captain's being just as embarrassed in another way.

We were joined by three little boys, patched but not ragged, who walked solemnly beside us and never took their eyes from our faces. The Captain got the lion's share of their attention. After all, I did have on a Cossack hat, and though the rest of my clothes were perhaps a little peculiar I might be merely from some other part of Russia. But the Captain in his splendid khaki was quite evidently a gorgeous creature from some far land, if not indeed from another planet. The little boys were entranced. They gazed on him with gloating adoration.

The Captain's face, which had drained down to merely English ruddiness, began to pinken up again. I was enjoying it myself; I like a little attention now and then, even if I can just squeeze in on the edges of it.

The boys began to circle around us as we walked, walking slowly backwards as they arced in front of us and then scurrying behind to make another circuit.

"Really," the Captain said, and he was flustered as I know he would never be under enemy fire. I do know that about Englishmen, though I can't explain it. Let a machine-gun be turned on them and they become as cool as though the hot lead was a cold shower in their favorite cricket club.

"Really," said the Captain, "if this doesn't stop I shall have to return to the hotel."

And just then two little girls joined our procession, and their eyes were even bigger and brighter and more adoring than the boys'. I really thought for a moment that the Captain was going to turn and bolt. But the girls' appearance actually saved him from perhaps endless embarrassment, though it precipitated the greatest shock of all.

The boys apparently felt that feminine competition threw them in the shade. Suddenly one of the boys who had held one hand carefully behind his back all this time, stepped directly in front of the Captain and brought his hand into view. He was holding a big, a very big, red flower, and he held it out to the Captain as an offering.

The Captain stopped dead in his tracks. He was completely stumped. He was not the type which can ever be rude. But neither could he see himself strolling through this grim city of a country in the death struggle of a terrible war, holding in one hand a large red flower.

He finally pointed in desperation at me.

"Give it to him," he suggested, and there was desperation in his voice.

The little boy didn't even shift his gaze to me. He had seen me and seemingly hadn't been impressed. He held the flower extended a moment longer, and then turned

176 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

and walked away in the direction from which we had come. The other boys joined him, and after a moment's hesitation the girls followed.

We walked on silently, and I noticed a single drop of perspiration bulge out from under the Captain's cap to course slowly over his temple and cheek. A backward glance showed me the five children walking silently away. Between us on the sidewalk lay the big red flower, as limp as though a foot had crushed it.

We never mentioned that episode again, either then or later in Moscow. But I am sure the Captain often thought of it, and wondered how he could have acted differently. He was such a kind young man. He wouldn't have hurt a child's feelings for any price. Yet under the circumstances, and being an Englishman, he had been unable to act any other way.

I have often thought of that little tragedy, too, but for a different reason. I used to get comfort from it in Moscow, when nobody would even look at me, when I was weighed down with that feeling of invisibility. I remembered then that I had seen a Russian boy offer friendship to a foreigner. And he had taken it with deep philosophy and without anger when the bars of language and general outlook on life had prevented acceptance of his gift. I like to think that the real Russian character, now somewhat altered outwardly by the exigencies of war, is best exemplified by the little boy of Baku with his big red flower and his generous heart.

Shortly after the children left us we came to a place where the park ended and the sidewalk led us back to a water-front street from which we could see the harbor only down dead-end cross streets. And these dead ends were blocked off, and there was a sentry at each barricade.

Something apparently was going on in those warehouses and on those docks which was not for such as we to see more closely.

The water-front buildings were long and drab, and through their dirty windows we could vaguely see hundreds of soldiers sitting at ill-lit trestle tables. They were eating, perhaps, or writing letters, or playing games. All we could make out without stopping for a good look—and we thought we'd probably better not do that—was that they were in uniform.

Then we began to meet men in the street. We realized suddenly that we had seen scarcely any men in Baku. There were a good many women in the streets, and a few children, but almost no men at all. But now we saw men, or beings who had been men and a few who might again closely resemble men.

For we had walked into a district which was evidently a backwater in the rushing river of war. Here floated war's jetsam, the men who had been just too lucky, or in many cases not lucky enough, to have been killed. Great piles of dead lay just a little way from here, at Stalingrad, at Mozdok, at Tuapse. Here were the half dead, the living dead.

Legless men in wheel-chairs gave directions to the blind who pushed them. Men without arms leaned to take a cigaret with their mouths from comrades who had arms but were lacking other parts. There were men without faces and men without minds, and the latter were the only ones who laughed.

The English Captain had been through the blitz in London, and I have seen several wars at first hand. It was no secret to us that war is nightmare translated into reality by man. But about a block of that hospital and so-called rehabilitation center was all we could take when there

178 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

was no necessity or reason for taking more. We turned without a word and walked across the street.

At the corner we decided to head up into town, away from the harbor, and so return to the hotel without retracing our steps. Dusk was already deepening, but we thought we could make it before full blackout was upon us.

As we started to walk up the side street a sentry stepped from shadow and waved toward the far sidewalk.

"*Tovarishi*," he called, and we stopped dead in our tracks with astonishment.

We had both been told before we entered the country that the word *Tovarish*, meaning comrade, was used by Russians for Russians, and Russians only. We had been told that no Russian would so address us, and we had been cautioned that we must never so address a Russian. That was for the inner circle. We were outsiders.

And so when the shadowy soldier called us *Tovarishi* we stopped in surprise and also in pleasure. This man had called us comrades. He had, in effect, called us friends. We, Russians, salute you, an Englishman and an American, because we are all comrades of the United Nations—that sort of stuff. It tickles down your spine and settles in your vitals as warm as a curled-up kitten in your lap.

But the sentry had been misled by the gathering dark. He erased his error with a wave of the hand not occupied with his rifle. "*Gospodin*," he said, using the formal word for Mister, like *Monsieur* or *Signore*. In sign language he let us know that we could walk up the side of the street he had forbidden to us when he thought we were Russians.

I found it like that all the time I was in Russia. All sorts of little exceptions are made for foreigners; little things are done to make their lives easier, but they are always

held aloof. We hurried up that darkening street as though we had been discriminated against instead of having a rule broken in our favor.

We were well back toward the hotel, and it was very dark, when the air-raid sirens let loose their banshee wail. The only light as we backed against a building wall was a moving splutter of blue where a trolley arm scraped against the overhead power line.

I must take a chance that this will sound like bravado when I say that we felt a relief at that alarm that warned of terror and death in the skies. But it is true. You see, we both knew about air raids. They were familiar phenomena of wartime life. And we had had many unusual experiences that day, and felt completely out of place, out of our own world. But air raids we could take in our stride.

If Baku was bombed that night, as it had been before and as it was again later, the bombs must have been dropped far out on the oil field. Or perhaps the raiders were chased away and had to waste their bombs on open countryside. At any rate, we heard no bombs burst, and after a few minutes we felt our way back to the hotel with feet long trained to blackouts. We heard the all-clear sound as we pushed through the outer doors and then moved from the buffer chamber into the scarcely more brilliant light of the lobby.

The two dim figures were still bent over their ledgers, and if they heard us they didn't look up, at least until our backs were turned to them as we climbed the stairs. We went into the Captain's room and turned on the one dim light. The blackout curtains were carefully drawn, and there was a certain coziness, though the inside air had a cave-like chill.

180 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

The Captain rummaged in one of his Bond Street bags, luggage of the what-an-officer-should-have type, and produced a half-bottle of whisky. There was a glass on the sitting-room table and another in the bathroom. He poured two drinks. We raised our glasses. We tried to think of a toast. Nothing seemed to fit. We drank the whisky straight, and in one gulp.

The Intourist boy, when he came in shortly, said we could have supper together in the Captain's room. The menu was exactly the same as for lunch, including four ounces of vodka. So we said all right, if that's what they had, that's what we'd take.

"The wodka, too?" the boy asked, eyeing our whisky bottle.

Yes, the wodka too, we said. Our whisky was almost gone and would be entirely gone by the time the wodka came.

I was feeling a very pleasant glow from the whisky, and I looked forward to a still more pleasant glow as soon as I got some vodka built up on the whisky base. It is in dreamy off-base moments like that that life has a way of delivering a swift hook to the jaw.

"Your meals, including breakfast to-morrow, will be seventy-two rubles," the boy said. "And for your room it's eighty-four rubles. That's 156 rubles. Will you please pay now, so no time will be lost in the morning?"

So the moment had come. The specter of the N.K.V.D. loomed over us again. I wondered if my office in New York would continue to pay my salary to my family if I was imprisoned for violating the Russian money laws. Smuggling. Black market stuff. How did I know what I had sworn to do and not to do in all those Russian papers I had signed in Teheran? Perhaps they could get me for perjury, too.

I reached into side pockets, stalling to see if the Captain wouldn't make the first move. But he was waiting, too. So I took the bull by the horns, pulled out my little roll of five one-hundred ruble notes, and laid two of them on the table. With a barely audible sigh the captain discovered two similar bills in a buttoned pocket and put them carefully beside mine. Now we were for it.

It wasn't my bottle, but I couldn't stand on ceremony. I poured the last of the whisky into the two glasses and handed one to the Captain. He clutched at it and drank.

Over the rim of my glass I watched the Intourist boy pick up the four bills, count out change, and lay it in two piles of small notes on the table.

"*Sposiba*," he said. "*Dosvadania*."

Which even I knew meant merely thanks and I'll be seeing you. The boy went out and closed the door.

The Captain and I looked at each other and grinned.

"You're more guilty than I am," he said. "That two hundred is all I dared bring in. You're two times and a half as guilty."

Then he jumped up and ran to the door. "If that dinner is going to take long," he called to the boy, "please have the vodka sent up right away."

It was before dawn and very dark when we stumbled downstairs in the morning and returned to the airport in our rickety bus. But light came as we waited there, shivering in the morning chill.

At Teheran, where all things were still plentiful, the plane engines had been started with the usual booster batteries. But in Baku I saw for the first time the ingenious Russian method of doing without such batteries.

An old truck drove out to the plane. It had a contraption like an elephant's trunk extending forward from above

182 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

the driver's cab. Plane and truck came face to face, and the elephant's proboscis was attached to the propeller hub. The trunk-like thing was evidently some sort of drive shaft operated by the truck's engine. Thus the stiff plane engine was turned over by the truck engine and suddenly roared into life of its own, upon which the trunk automatically disengaged itself.

The air line into Russia from Persia used to run all the way up the west shore of the Caspian to Astrakhan, at the mouth of the Volga, and then head across country for Kuibyshev. But when I went in, Astrakhan was far too near the German lines, and it was necessary to cross the sea from Baku. That flight across the Caspian was uneventful, but at least it was possible to look at the water below. Never once in Russia were the curtains pulled in any plane, as they are in most of the belligerent world, even though I passed over many vital military installations. I suppose it is unnecessary in a country which is so careful as to who enters and so well informed about its own people.

Turning northward as we reached the eastern shore we made a fuel stop at Guriev at the Caspian's head. And then began one of the most exciting and disturbing plane rides I have ever endured.

The Russian steppe extends all the way from Guriev to Kuibyshev, a grassy sea as flat as the Caspian we had just left behind. Guriev is at the mouth of the Ural River, and we started up along the course of that unimposing stream.

I thought at first that something must be wrong when we failed to gain altitude after the take-off, any altitude at all. We flew so low that the tops of the river banks, which were not high, were above us. We skimmed the

water. Then, as the river turned, we porpoised over the west bank and were out on the steppe, and I mean on it.

We were so low that we were scarcely above the tall grass and rushes of this endless plain. Suddenly a camel fled madly from directly beneath us, its two humps flopping grotesquely. This was doubly startling to me. In the first place I had never thought of the Russian steppes as camel range, and in the second place I didn't see how there was room between us and the ground for a camel to have passed. I will always believe our pilot must have pulled back his wheel a bit to get over that camel. And even then we must have flown between its humps, as through a mountain pass.

Once I made sure that this hedge-hopping was intentional, I didn't mind it so much. But low flying is no fun to me under any circumstances, and this was low flying such as I had never seen. I learned later that the route between Guriev and Kuibyshev was always flown that way because of the enemy. It seems a plane skimming the surface is a far more difficult target than one vulnerable to attack from all sides in the high sky. Also, of course, low flying permits quicker landing in emergency, to allow the passengers to hide themselves in the head-high grass.

It was close to dusk when we reached Kuibyshev, and there was no Intourist bus to meet us as there had been in Baku. The English Captain unlimbered the Russian he had learned in London in preparation for his Moscow mission, and we learned that there wasn't going to be any bus. No gasoline. And the Kuibyshev airport is fifteen miles from town.

The waiting-room at that airport is little more than a shack, cold and drafty, and we had left the warmth of the Caucasus behind. The cold felt bitter to my bones and

blood, weakened by a summer on the Indian plains. I wondered if I hadn't been a fool after all to leave the hospital in Teheran while I was still wobbly from strep throat and sulfa. Dr. Niewirth had not spoken highly of my intelligence when I had insisted on proceeding.

Our Russian comrades took the situation calmly, preparing without complaint to spend the long night huddled on wooden benches. But the Captain and I were of softer stuff, and we asked to use a telephone so we could appeal to our Embassies.

I got the American Embassy first and was politely told that not one ounce of that month's gasoline ration remained, and there was nothing that could be done for me. Then the Captain called the British Embassy, and we were saved. They would send a car for him immediately, and they would take me in too and deliver me back to the airport in the morning. The Captain seemed to think it quite natural that the British Embassy should have gas when the American had none, but I didn't.

The Russian driver of the British Embassy car spoke English quite well and was a good guide on the way in. We passed many bands of workers, tools in hands, wending their weary way homeward, and saw that each column was accompanied by numerous soldiers with rifles on their shoulders. Our driver said they were all prisoners—criminals, not political prisoners or prisoners of war. The soldiers were their guards. I mentioned that the guards didn't seem to be very watchful against a break for freedom.

"No one will try to escape," the driver said. "Where would they escape to? Without ration cards they could not eat. Without identity cards they could not get a job or stay under any roof. They are held captive by stronger things than rifles."

We passed through a large settlement of barracks which the driver said was the convict settlement. All prisoners, he said, worked on the roads or on construction jobs like airfields, or helped with the crops at harvest time. They were seldom sent to the army. It was an honor to serve in the army, even in the most dangerous places, like Stalingrad. These prisoners had forfeited the right to receive such honor.

We entered the town proper over a bridge that crossed the Volga. It was my first sight of this famous stream. It was very placid, very leisurely, an almost lazy stream perhaps half a mile in width. It was hard to believe that so few miles downstream this same river boiled with shells and bombs at Stalingrad. It was strange to think that this water, so leaden gray, would be stained with red before it reached the Caspian.

The Captain dropped me in front of the American Embassy, promising to pick me up in the morning, and I entered the building to see if arrangements could be made for me at a hotel. I was taken to the office of Loy Henderson, then chargé d'affaires in the absence of our sea-going Ambassador, Admiral Standley. He explained the gas shortage to me.

It seems there was a shortage both of gasoline and of wood, which was the only remaining fuel for heat. So when the Embassy was informed that it could have a winter's supply of wood if it would truck it away from a railroad siding twenty miles from Kuibyshev within a week, it burned up all its gas getting that wood. So there wasn't any more gas till the first of the month. The British Embassy hadn't got its allotment of wood yet, so it still had gas.

The Russian clerk to whom I had talked from the air-

port came in to say that there were no rooms at the hotel. Henderson rose to the occasion and invited me to stay with him and one of the military attachés at their house.

We left the Embassy shortly, afoot because of the gas situation, and at the door two large gentlemen in mufti fell in behind us. It was very dark in the blackout, and we walked slowly, Henderson guiding me over the crossings which he knew from long experience. I heard a car creeping along behind us. I asked what was this anyway.

Henderson explained that the two men lock-stepping along behind us were the men assigned to the Embassy and the ranking diplomat by the Russian Government. As Admiral Standley was back in Washington he rated this attention.

Here at last was the N.K.V.D. at work, though I soon learned that in Russia it is not customary to speak those four letters aloud. The usual thing among foreigners is to refer to these shadow men as the Y.M.C.A.

Henderson told me that these men, and the ones who manned the other two shifts to make a round-the-clock coverage, stayed outside the Embassy as long as he was there. They had a telephone hung on the outer wall, and they reported all arrivals and all departures. Thus if any one arrived in whom the Y.M.C.A. was interested, or thought it might be interested, some one would trot around from headquarters. When the guest left the Embassy he would be tailed for as long as surveillance was considered necessary.

Wherever Henderson went, these two, whoever they were according to the time of day, were sure to follow. When he moved at dinner-time from the Embassy to his home for the night, they went along and hung up their little telephone on his house wall.

If he went to the theater in the evening, they went, too, and sat directly behind him. The people who had booked those seats were just out of luck.

"They're really very friendly," Henderson told me. "The other night I mislaid my gloves in the theater. They took over very efficiently and had them back for me in no time at all."

I asked him about the car I could hear still sneaking along behind us in the dark. It was traveling in low and made a ghostly sort of chain-dragging sound.

Henderson said that was in case he should meet some one in a car who offered him a lift. In such an event the footmen of the Y.M.C.A. would be left behind, but the car could still follow the trail.

It seemed amusing to me, if nothing else, that although the Russian government could not afford enough gas to permit the American Ambassador to drive a mile from the Embassy to his home, it could furnish enough to have him trailed by the Y.M.C.A.

Henderson's house was very pleasant, and Henderson demonstrated that he knew how to make a palatable cocktail on a vodka base. We had a good dinner and a pleasant evening talking of mutual friends, but I never lost a slight nervousness at thought of those two men standing in the cold outside our door.

In the morning there was American coffee, and Henderson even got up to see me off, though it was still long before light. The English captain, who had been informed by phone of my whereabouts, picked me up promptly and we returned to the airport.

The Volga was glassy gray in the darkness, and the whole town had an atmosphere of gray decay. Even the prisoner-workers were still abed.

188 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

The flight from Kuibyshev to Moscow was uneventful except for two stops which gave me food for thought. We stopped at Kazan for fuel and at Gorky because the weather was bad ahead and it was uncertain whether we could get in at Moscow.

I didn't see either city in close-up, just flying over them. I would have liked to roam around them as I had done at Baku, because I knew they were both big war-industry cities. But we weren't allowed to leave the airfields, and that was that.

The Kazan stop was apparently only for fuel, but we stayed there, for some unknown reason, for two hours, so it was called a lunch stop to make it sound reasonable. It was a lunch stop only if you happened to have any lunch with you, however. The poor Russians who had stayed all night in that windswept shed at Kuibyshev looked a little blue around the gills, and they certainly had had no opportunity to buy any box lunches.

I was more fortunate, because I had had some sandwiches put up at the Darband in Teheran before I left, and I hadn't even undone the box. The fact that sandwiches are two days old makes very little difference to a hungry stomach.

I tried offering to share my food with one of the Russians, but while the refusal was very polite I didn't attempt to press the point with the others. So the captain and I had a pretty good feast.

What struck me as most peculiar, at Kazan and all the other behind-the-lines airports I visited, was the complete absence of any combat planes. There were literally thousands of transports and quite a lot of trainers. But no fighter planes and no bombers. I still don't know where the Red Air Force keeps its war planes when they are not in the air over enemy territory.

The most imposing sight at any of these airports was the long rows of Douglas transports. They all bore the red star of the Russian Army, and I knew they were all Russian-made, but I didn't see then why they should need so many.

Later, after the big drive started and armies suddenly appeared where no armies had been, I realized that before I ever reached Moscow I had seen one of the greatest Russian weapons.

These transports are the detached wings of an army that flies. Other countries have specialized in fighter planes, or heavy bombers, or dive-bombers. The Red Army majored in the humble transport, and so gained a mobility of ground forces and a maintenance of supply routes probably never attained by any other army in history.

I remember that after the big push started on November 19th of 1942, I discussed the probabilities with both American and British military attachés in Moscow, Kuibyshev, and Teheran. And they had all missed this salient point, just as I had. It was only later that the Russian achievement forced on me the realization of the significance of those serried rows of transports I saw on every field as I entered Russia.

The man I considered the ablest military attaché of the bunch asked me what I thought of the Russian drive about a week after it started. He asked how far I thought it could go.

I said I didn't see how they could go more than fifty miles without a long halt to consolidate their gains.

"That's my idea, too," he said. "It's like a snake attacking. It coils and strikes, and then it has to coil again before it can make another strike. That's just what is going to happen here. They may throw the Germans out of Stalin-

grad and push them back a few miles. I'd be the last to underestimate the strength of this army. It's the tops. They may be able to make darned good advances on all fronts. But then they will have to dig in and wait for communication lines to be completed, for supplies to be brought up, for operating bases to be established close to their new lines."

I'm glad he said all that to me, because he is really about as smart in such things as any one we have. And ignorance shares misery's affection for company.

The Red Army didn't stop at fifty miles or one hundred miles or two hundred. It kept going, on and on, and all the world wondered. How did they keep up their supply lines? How did they swing reserves to the weak spots in the nick of time? How could any army travel so far and so fast and still be fresh for fighting?

I was given the answer at every field I stopped at on my journey into Russia. But I was the boy who had eyes and saw not.

Entered from the east, Russia seems like home to an Occidental. And even in winter, even in wartime, Moscow seems a queen of cities.

There are broad streets, well-paved and lined with buildings of solid substance. The sidewalks are not used as sleeping places. There are no rickshaws, no coolies. There are (and this seems to me absolute refutation of the claim that Russia is a godless country) no camels. Apparently those baleful brutes have been banished to the steppes of the upper Caucasus.

Delight welled up in me as I drove toward town from the airport, again as guest of my English captain. Our way lay straight down Gorky Street, a boulevard of impressive breadth. With every mile, realization grew that I was

back in Europe. It looked and felt and smelled like Europe. I had never been in Moscow before, but in entering it I had the sensation of coming home.

It wasn't until after I was installed in the Metropole Hotel that I realized there was something different about Moscow from any other city I had been in. I couldn't place what it was for a time, and then it came to me. I had driven through the heart of the city, and yet I had seen no store windows with displays of things to buy.

There were no stores. There was nothing to buy. It was my first experience of a city on a complete war basis, and there was something shocking about it. I felt as I did once when I was introduced to a very charming woman with a quality of expression I couldn't immediately place, and then I suddenly realized that she was blind.

I discovered later that Moscow really does still have some stores. There are hole-in-the-wall government food stores. There are two stores exclusively for foreigners. And not even Russia's rigid wartime régime has been able to abolish beauty parlors. There is also a public market, of which more later. But by and large there is nothing to sell in Moscow, nothing to buy. Money has lost its meaning.

It's strange how completely we have let ourselves become enslaved by money. We know, of course, that it is merely a system of counters, but we don't really believe it. Just try dropping yourself into a place where money has lost its meaning. Under such conditions, I, at least, felt more cut adrift than I ever have by the mere fact that I didn't know a word of the language of the place in which I found myself.

I have received a purely perfunctory thank-you in Moscow for a dinner tip of many rubles. But when I gave the

192 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

waiter a cigaret instead of money I have been bowed out like royalty.

When you get used to it, there's quite a kick in having money mean nothing. You feel as though you had beaten down a barricade between yourself and reality and were finally face to face with life.

After all, tobacco really is something. So are food, and clothing, and strong drink. Warmth against the cold is really valuable, and a piece of soap has more true value than all the watermarked banknotes in the world.

Just the same, about the first thing I did in Moscow, child as I am of the fairyland world of money, was to get hold of some cold cash. I'd run through the money I'd borrowed in Teheran. And even though there was apparently little to buy in Moscow, I had already discovered that foreigners are charged whacking good rates for everything they can get. The explanation of that is not that Russia deliberately sticks up its guests. But every ruble a foreigner spends in Russia represents an equivalent in dollars or pounds. And Russia needs all the foreign exchange it can get, apparently, lend-lease or no lend-lease.

As the ruble is legally worthless outside Russia, its value is purely fictitious. There is a pegged rate of six rubles to the dollar, but British and American diplomats are allowed to buy Russian money in Russia at the rate of twelve to the dollar, and foreign reporters are permitted to draw money at that rate from their embassies.

That leads to some peculiar results. When I bought my ticket from Teheran to Moscow I bought it with Iranian rials, which were accepted at the equivalent of six rubles to the dollar. It came to one hundred and eighty dollars worth of rials. When I left Russia I bought my ticket with

twelve-to-the-dollar rubles, and so it cost me only ninety dollars, or just half as much.

It takes about ten days to get money from the American Embassy in Moscow. That's because first you have to cable your needs to your office, and your office has to deposit dollars with the State Department in Washington. Then the State Department notifies the Embassy to give you twelve rubles out of their funds for every dollar deposited in Washington. It takes a lot of cabling.

I could, as a matter of fact, have got along for ten days without any money. Hotel bills are payable monthly, and there is little else to spend money on. But I didn't know that, so I took the simple course of borrowing.

There is a freemasonry among reporters which recognizes that every one must go broke quite frequently. Money is lent back and forth, without so much as an I.O.U., in sums that would stagger the home offices.

The first American reporter I ran into in the Metropole handed over two thousand rubles without any question, though I had only met him once before, and that was long ago and in a far part of the world. Then I was set to begin operations, as soon as I could find out how reporters operate in Russia.

I can't say that my spirits were very high right at that moment. I have had few experiences more depressing than that of walking from the bright mid-afternoon street into the dungeon damp and darkness of the Metropole.

There was little light and heat to spare for hotels, none for private dwellings, in those grim months before the great surge westward began. I have never lived in a tomb, but if duty ever calls upon me to do so I suspect it will remind me of the Metropole.

194 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

You enter through a blackout swing door and then a revolving door, and you find yourself at the bottom of a score of broad stone steps leading up to the lobby. I see but poorly in the semi-dark, and I thought at first that there were no lights at all in the hotel. Then a dim radiance dawned above me, and I stumbled up the stairs, duffle-bag on shoulder and small baggage clutched as best I could.

Seeing an Intourist sign over the corner desk I made for that and found the manager, a dark Englishman turned Russian whom I never knew except as Jack. He said there weren't any rooms available and turned away as if that ended the conversation.

As the Metropole is the only hotel in Moscow where foreign reporters are allowed to stay, I had no intention of dropping the conversation. I asked about Jim Brown's room. And how about the rooms given up by Walter Grebner of *Time* and Larry Leseuer of C.B.S., whom I had met in Teheran on their way out of Russia? Even if all those were filled, Eddy Gilmore had told me I could use his room.

Jack said all those rooms were occupied. Eddy's had been given up by his office in his absence because it was too big to heat with the available fuel. Some Russian officers were living there now. They apparently didn't expect to have any heat.

But Jack suddenly recalled that the A.P. had a small room it used as an office. I could ask to use that until a room came along for me. I got him to call Henry Cassidy, whom I had known in France in the first part of the war, and he told me to move in.

Once installed, I began the rounds looking for friends. I knew that Lee Stowe was still in Moscow, and Edgar Snow had come in just a week ahead of me. They were

both out, so I found where Henry Shapiro of the U.P. lived and knocked on his door. I had never met him, but I had admired his despatches and I felt I just had to have some one to talk to.

The corridors of the Metropole were even darker than the lobby, and when you touched the walls to guide yourself they had the coldness of death. It was with distinct relief that I heard some one shout to me to come in.

There were two men in the room. One, sitting in a straight chair with his coat on, had the bushiest wiry black hair I have ever seen. He had the face of an ascetic, thin, finely drawn, thoughtful. The other man, who was in bed, was equally dark, but his hair lay flat against a large round skull.

I had the Alice-in-Wonderland feeling that they were wearing each other's hair. It seemed to me that the fat one should have had that tornado of hair worn by the thin one, and the latter would have looked more natural in the reclining coiffure of the man in bed.

Introducing myself, I learned that the tall, thin man was Maurice Hindus and the one in bed was Shapiro. I expressed the hope that he was not seriously ill. They both laughed at that, and Shapiro threw back the covers to disclose that he was fully dressed, including an overcoat and muffler.

Most of the Americans, I learned, were accustomed to go to bed fully clothed of an afternoon just to store up a little heat. That was a trick I quickly learned and religiously followed during my time in Moscow.

I asked Hindus and Shapiro what I should do about a secretary, an immediate necessity as I spoke no word of the language. Jim Brown had shared a man with Walter Kerr of the New York *Herald Tribune*, but when Jim left Walter took him full time. This was necessary because

196 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Walter had taken on Larry Leseuer's job for C.B.S. as well as his own newspaper work.

I was told that the best secretary in Moscow was Natalia Petrovna Rene, and that although she was working with Reuter's British Agency she was anxious to get with an American outfit. I wanted some one above average because I hoped to be able to train some one who could carry on alone until Brown could return.

Shapiro jumped out of bed and ran into the dark hall, returning a moment later with the lady in question. She was a big, long-legged woman of thirty or so, with hair the color of a tangerine and a voice with coarse sandpaper in it. She spoke almost perfect English, her heritage from an English mother who had come to Russia as a governess. I hired her on the spot and arranged to start work as soon as I obtained my credentials. I never regretted it: she was a good reporter and learned so fast that I was able to get away sooner than I had hoped.

At supper that first night I met the British and American reporters and got all the information I needed to start me off on my job. They were an able crowd, most of whom had been in Russia too long, all of whom were a little jumpy from being thrown constantly in the same small company.

The Metropole itself was enough to give any one the jim-jams, and we were constrained to eat together—just the reporters—in a small dark room on the second floor. Sometimes that room seemed to me like a lions' cage, with nervous beasts glaring at each other over their bones.

The Americans were Lee Stowe, Ed Snow, Cassidy, Shapiro, Meyer Handler, who is also with U.P., Hindus, Walter Kerr, Robert Magidoff of N.B.C., and Irina Scariatina of *Collier's*. An equal number of Britishers made up

the party. Except for Stowe, Snow, Irina and me, they had all been there more than a year, and conditions had not sweetened their natures.

I never saw any open outbreaks of temper. But there were constant signs of nerves which seemed childish to me until I started getting that way, too. Some of them didn't speak to each other. Others had tacitly ganged up against some particular perpetrator of a real or imagined bit of skullduggery.

The most recent cause for dissension in our happy little family, I found, had to do with the breakdown of an attempt at coöperation.

The foreign office, where the censoring is done and where the communiqués are issued, is almost a mile from the telegraph office. So it became the custom for any one who was going down to file a story after it was approved to offer to take along any other copy that was ready. One of the men had a car with a chauffeur, and he was urgent in his offers of such help. All went well until it was discovered by accident that he was having his chauffeur file his own stuff but hold everybody else's copy until his next trip.

That might have caused a fight in other places, but these reporters in Russia had become imbued with Russian subtlety. They took their revenge by doing what was known among the Metropole set as letting a rumor rabbit out of the bag.

They set the whisper echoing along the cold corridors that President Roosevelt was on a secret journey to Moscow by plane and was to arrive the next day in Kuibyshev.

The intended victim of the ruse sniffed the rumor-rabbit bait and fell into the trap. He believed he had the big news exclusively, and he went to work to achieve the beat of his career. He pulled all possible wires and obtained a

train ticket to Kuibyshev. He made the five-hundred-mile journey in an unheated train that was shunted for hours on to sidings to give right of way to troop trains. And then he found his rumor was false.

He didn't know whether he had been misled innocently or maliciously, and he made no mention of his arduous and futile trip when he returned. But at the first meal the bitter truth was brought home to him. One of the other reporters remarked that he was going to the telegraph office to file a story and said to the victim:

"You got any copy to go? I'll file it right along with my story, even if it's a big scoop, like Roosevelt flying to see Stalin."

The victim looked around the table and saw in every eye the bright gleam of revenge.

At that first supper of mine in the Metropole I was interested to find out if the fare in Moscow was as plentiful as it had been in Baku. It didn't take me long.

Our waiter was a very ancient man, the skin of his bald head so tightly drawn and transparent that you could almost see his brain working. He had one typewritten menu which was just a gesture, as it offered no choice. He handed that menu first to Walter Kerr with the proud announcement that there was meat.

"Take away that menu," Walter grinned at him. "Any kind of meat there is I can order right off the Racing Form."

The waiter couldn't speak any English, so I am sure that Walter's wisecrack didn't have anything to do with it, but that was the last time while I was in Russia that we had any kind of meat at all, equine or other variety.

It was a long journey from our dining-room to the Metropole kitchen, and as I said, our waiter was very old,

far too old to be an agile pedestrian. There was cabbage soup at both lunch and supper, but it was never more than lukewarm. That held also for the vegetables, which were carrots, cabbage, and potatoes, and for the unidentifiable liquid that masqueraded as coffee. There were four slices of black bread, which would have been good if there had been any butter. And generally there was some sort of "pirojny," a general term which seemed to cover any form of pastry.

There was usually a small spoonful of sugar for the alleged coffee, but sometimes the hotel was out of sugar, and then we got a little lump of chocolate candy for sweetening.

After meat was dropped from the menu, a form of pink cold fish called *balik* made its appearance. You got two small squares, cut very thin. It was salmon, I suppose from the color, but it wasn't like our salmon. Maybe it was sturgeon. It was as slippery as tripe and covered with a cold dew. I never heard it referred to in the Metropole except as "that dead fish."

Just as they ran out of meat coincident with my arrival, so also I barely got in on the end of the egg supply. That is, hen's eggs. The breakfast staple after that was caviar, which has a sort of let-'em-eat-cake sound but really makes a very good breakfast dish.

But even if there had been no breakfast eggs of any type, either hen's or fish's, breakfast would still have been the gala meal. Because for breakfast we each got a very thin pat of butter. And like the Milne king, "I do like a little bit of butter to my bread."

After that first supper in the Metropole, Henry Cassidy offered to show me how lucky I was to get what I did. He opened a door which looked down on the main dining-room. It's a big room, with branching chandeliers that

200 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

once blazed with light. And in the center is the great fountain where legend says the Gypsy Rose Lees of Czarist Russia used to dance in champagne spray. They don't even bother to run water in it now: that would take a pump, and pumps take power.

You can't just walk into a restaurant and order a meal in Russia. There must be a reason to use a restaurant, and you must have written official permission or you won't be served. The main dining-room of the Metropole catered to people like our secretaries and to guests of the hotel, mostly army personnel on official missions from the front.

Even from our eyrie above the big hall I could see that these people had no such sumptuous food as we had just finished. They had one vegetable and only half as much bread. They had no pirojny. I was told they almost never had any butter. And caviar was doled out practically by the egg.

I made a mental note that first night that there was a good story in Russian food, no matter how many times it might have been told before. I thought of the slight sugar and coffee rationing there was at home at that time. I remembered the quantity and variety of food in India for any one who had the price. I recalled the meats and fresh vegetables and juicy melons in Iran just next door. The story of food, I thought, might be the story of Russia's greatness. It might be the story of our own salvation, if we should prove to have the courage to do as they were doing—almost starve behind the lines so that the army might be strong with food.

The next morning Natalia Petrovna took me to the Foreign Office to introduce me to the people in charge of the foreign press and to get my credentials.

You couldn't get into the Foreign Office building with-

out a pass, and permanent passes were issued only in the Foreign Office building. So we had to go to another building first to get a one-time pass, so I could get into the Foreign Office to get a permanent pass. It is not only in democracies that you find bureaucratic red tape.

In a little office off the big cold press-room I was introduced to N. G. Polgonov. The real boss of foreign press affairs preferred to stay in Kuibyshev, so Polgonov, his assistant, was the man the reporters actually dealt with.

Polgonov turned out to be a pleasant little man with very thick glasses. All but two of the foreign correspondents in Moscow at that time were from English-speaking countries, but Polgonov didn't speak a word of English. He did, however, speak a brand of French just as bad as mine, so we got on together splendidly.

He made me out a permanent pass to the Foreign Office, a pass permitting me to be abroad after the eleven o'clock curfew, and an authorization to the Post Office Department to accept collect telegrams from me. I was all set. Then he asked me what I was most interested in, what I would like to do. I told him I wanted to go to the front, to Stalingrad or as near as it was possible to get.

He blinked at me through his thick lenses and assured me that he would do everything in his power to get such permission for me. Those assurances were repeated daily all the time I was in Russia. I never got to the front. Nor did any other reporter during the period of my stay.

For the first few days in Moscow I didn't send any despatches. There was big news every day out of Stalingrad, but it was all in the official communiqués, and they were broadcast over the Moscow radio. My office got the spot news in that fashion hours before I could get it to them. So I was free to roam around and absorb the story behind the spot news story.

202 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

That was difficult to do, because "consorting with foreigners" was definitely frowned on. There's been an awful lot of trash and nonsense printed about the N.K.V.D., but just the same I'd hate to have that organization frown on me. A transgressing Russian can be frowned right over the Urals and on to a Siberian collective farm.

The Russian-in-the-street interprets "consorting" to mean having anything at all to do with foreigners. The result is something that I have never met in any other country. I have been in countries where Americans at least for the time being have been definitely disliked. Because I am an American I have been jeered at and even, as in India, physically assaulted.

But Moscow was the first place I had ever been where I was so pointedly ignored because I was not a native son. While I was in Russia, the only people who would speak to me were the other foreigners and the Russian officials specifically assigned to deal with foreigners.

It used to give me the feeling that I was invisible. I'd walk along a Moscow street, and the people's eyes would wash over me as if I wasn't there.

Fortunately for me, this consorting rule did not apply to Natalia Petrovna, who was licensed by the Foreign Office to work for foreign journalists, and she was an invaluable guide. She had never been out of Russia herself, but the English blood in her veins gave her a mind which could meet the English or American mind.

She told me that her husband was a partizan, a guerilla fighter behind the German lines, and that she hadn't heard from him in a year. He had been in the Red Army, and his unit had been cut off near Smolensk in October of 1941, in the first big German drive.

So he and the men under him—he was a lieutenant—cut their way to freedom in the only direction open to

them. They took to the forest west of Smolensk and joined up with similar bands. They became partizans, raiding German headquarters and military installations at night, living off the land.

Natalia Petrovna knew that this had happened because other guerrillas, who had slipped back through the German lines, had brought her word. But a year had passed, when I knew her, without further information.

She told me there were hundreds of thousands of such guerrillas. "Perhaps millions," she added with a typical Russian casualness about arithmetic.

Well, I thought, there is story number two. I'll get the story of food, and I'll get the story of the partizans. Natalia Petrovna may be the highest paid secretary in Russia, but she's worth it.

I didn't try to get the story directly from Natalia Petrovna, however. I never did that. After all, she was licensed as a secretary and translator, not as a news source. And she was a Russian, subject to Russian rules and Russian discipline. Also, when she talked about the guerrillas, because of her husband, her nose got red and she snuffled.

But I did sympathize with her, and I asked her what she did to ease her mind and calm her fears. In other countries, I said, she would probably go to church and pray away at least the unbearable portion of her burden.

"What can you do, Natalia Petrovna?" I asked. "What can you do in a country which denies the existence of God, a country in which you would probably be afraid to go to church even if you wanted to, which I suppose you don't?"

"I go to church," she said.

So people still go to church in Russia, I learned. They don't consort with foreigners, because that is frowned on, and the Y.M.C.A. boys are everywhere. But they do go to

church when they want to, so presumably that is not frowned on. Also, presumably, the Y.M.C.A. boys have been told to lay off that stuff so far as church-going is concerned. That's very good information, Natalia Petrovna. That's story number three. Food and partizans and churches. I think it's about time we started doing some work, Natalia Petrovna.

The next day, having by now a room of my own, I started a regular routine of work. Natalia Petrovna telephoned me as soon as the newspapers arrived and then brought them to my room to read.

Reading the newspapers is fairly simple in Moscow, because there are only three, and they are restricted to four pages. Natalia Petrovna would read me the headlines first, and I'd tell her which stories to read in full. I never got much direct information from the papers, but I got a lot of good tips on stories to dig up for myself.

We generally cleaned up the papers by about eleven, and then Natalia Petrovna got me the eleven-o'clock communiqué by telephone. It seldom added anything important to the communiqué of the previous midnight. Then the routine work was through for the day, and I could work on special stories.

Radio men have a great advantage over newspaper correspondents in Moscow. They can talk direct to the people at home without the delay of hours almost always occurring in cable despatches, and they can have their news practically fresh up to the minute of broadcasting.

Because Magidoff of N.B.C. was planning to go on vacation, and I would take his place when he did, I studied the radio routine there. I found the Russian officials more fully aware of the news value of radio than such officials are almost anywhere else.

In the ordinary course of events, news was censored in the order of its arrival in the censor's office, but one exception was made for radio news. If a radio reporter brought in news any time within an hour and a half of his broadcast time he had absolute priority and was censored immediately, no matter how much press copy was piled up on the censor's desk.

This Russian recognition of the dominant position radio has taken in the news field impressed me anew with the growing importance of radio and strengthened a determination which had been growing in my mind for a long time, to become more closely associated with radio as soon as I got home.

But while my interest in broadcasting from Moscow remained academic, pending Magidoff's departure on vacation, I filled in my time with special newspaper stories which weren't hurt by radio's speed.

I filed a request with Polgonov for an interview with some one who could tell me about the partizans. He said he'd see what he could do. He also assured me he was still working on my earlier request to go to the front.

Then I went for a tour of churches, to test out Natalia Petrovna's tip that churches were still open for business and doing a thriving trade.

There used to be several hundred churches in Moscow. By the time this war began there were a bare twenty-five still open as churches. Those were for the old people, the people so set in their old-time ways that they couldn't see the advantage of disclaiming their God.

It served a double purpose to let those few churches run along. It let those molasses-minded oldsters find spiritual escape from the new way of life they were too stupid or too stubborn to espouse and so remain contented citizens, making no trouble for any one. And the remnant

churches served as marvelous museums of ancient history, for the education of the young in how much finer a life they lived than had their forebears, free from all the ancient shibboleths and superstitions of the God-fearing.

Into these churches, at the height of the reëducation of the Russian race from religion to reality, as interpreted by Soviet seers, these churches were used as horrible examples. The young would be taken to them in groups by competent instructors and shown how silly people look when they fall on their knees and bow before a completely invisible and therefore non-existent deity.

But then the war came, and soldiers began to die. By the hundreds at first, and then the thousands and the tens, the hundreds of thousands. Finally the deaths could be counted in millions. By the time I got to Russia there were millions dead, more millions wrecked for life, a life beside which death seemed merciful. There was scarcely a family in all that mighty land which did not have its personal tragedy, no home which did not hide its breaking hearts.

It is not permitted in Russia for any one to wear a black arm band in sign of family loss, or a black heart upon the breast as is the custom in some lands. But such grief can not be concealed. It shows plain in the face of the bereaved. The very posture of one so saddened tells its tale. The Russian régime recognized the explosive danger in such suppressed sorrow.

And so when Russians sorrowing for their dead, or praying that others might not die, turned for solace to these left-over churches, the government was too wise to try to stop them. The tipoff was given to the N.K.V.D., in its great oval building opposite the Foreign Office which is almost all windows, as though in denial of the common

belief that the new O.G.P.U. is also a creature of secrecy and hidden horror.

The atheist society known as the Militant Godless was quietly disbanded. Yemellian Jaroslavsky, the head of this organization, who had been a pretty big shot favored by the government, was neatly dropped by the scruff of his neck into the dark well of oblivion.

All this I had been told. Now I was seeing for myself. And by myself, so that no outer influence could lead me astray. It's easy enough to find churches in Moscow, or anywhere in Russia. You just keep your eyes raised above the very modest sky-line, and when you see steeples topped with what look like upside-down onions, that's a church.

I quickly found that I had not been misled about the number of people turning to the church for solace. Every one I entered was well attended. In some, masses were being celebrated, while in others there were merely throngs of people kneeling before ikons in silent and very humble prayer.

Nor were these church-goers only the ancient folk who had never been able, or at least willing, to foreswear their fathers' faith. There were as many young people—mostly women, naturally, because the male population of Moscow is confined to striplings and the very old—as there were older supplicants.

The most moving scene I saw that day, I think, was in the great church in Red Square, in the shadow of the Kremlin where the earlier anti-church edicts were formulated.

There is an especially beautiful ikon in that church, depicting the Virgin Mary in search of the dead, her dead. And in front of that ikon I found literally hundreds on their knees on the cold stone. They, too, were searching

for their dead, or the ones they feared were dead or sure to die.

I noticed that one by one many of those kneeling people would come forward to press trembling lips against the glass protecting the ikon. Some, however, merely rose after their prayers and stole quietly away.

Later I learned that there is a superstition in Moscow that if you kiss the glass over that particular ikon you will receive news of your loved one within three days. The people I saw who did not kiss the glass knew they would never hear again from those for whom they prayed. They were praying now entirely for their souls, not their bodies. But those who kissed the glass still hoped against failing hope that their men were alive. They prayed, and employed every charm that superstition could devise, to drive back the fear that was almost certainty.

I spent more time than I had intended on my tour of the churches, and it was dark when I came out of Red Square. The darkness in Moscow is very dark.

There is no blackout I know that is comparable to that in Moscow, except perhaps London's. And the London blackout is easy to understand. A people bombed as heavily and as often as Londoners have been, welcome the dark, insist on it. But a people who know the terrors of bombing largely by hearsay grow restive under the nervous strain of a complete blackout. First there are little infractions: lighting cigarets on the street, using flashlights. Finally the defense authorities, infected by the people they represent, relax their vigilance, and soon the blackout is a dimout.

I saw that happen in Paris, which in the winter of 1940 became little darker than the New York of 1943. But it didn't happen in Moscow.

When I was in Russia, Moscow had been bombed only once, and that was more than a year previously. Yet the blackout was still absolute. I never saw the tiniest infraction of the blackout rules.

That tells a good deal about the Muscovite character, though I am not positive just what it tells. They are certainly the most patient people under restrictions that I have ever seen. What I am not sure of is what activates that patience. It might of course be merely that they are so terrified of their own government, so frightened of the N.K.V.D., that they do not dare break any smallest rule. Or it might be that they have been taught the wisdom of the rules and follow them in a more perfect coöperation between a people and their government than I have seen elsewhere.

Certain it is that they are very patient. The people of Moscow will stand in line for anything, and wait and wait their turn regardless of the bitter cold or swirling snow. They line up at the food stores, at bus stops, even at newspaper stands.

There are no police in evidence at these impromptu queues, at least no uniformed police. Yet I have never seen any jostling in Russia, no attempt to crowd in ahead on a bus, to snatch at food over another's shoulder, even to reach past some one else to pick a paper off a stand.

Perhaps originally this patience was taught with terror; I don't know. But when I witnessed it there was evidence that it was second nature to the Russians to wait their turn. It may have started with discipline from without; it had at any rate become self-discipline. And self-discipline, I think, is a secret weapon greater than guns.

Although there had been no bombing of Moscow for thirteen months when I arrived, the authorities had apparently called the power of suggestion to their aid in

preventing the people from forgetting what bombing is like.

Little damage was done in that single raid, concerning which there is an interesting story, but one bomb did tear a good part of the front off the white-pillared Bolshoi Theater where the ballet is shown. That damage had never been repaired. It was left as a constant reminder of greater damage which might come if defenses were neglected.

There were also other things to remind Muscovites that visitations might be expected from the sky, even in daylight. They couldn't stir out of their houses without seeing what their government had done to confuse the enemy if he sent over daylight bombers or even photographic reconnaissance planes. Moscow was the most camouflaged city I have ever seen. Camouflaged with paint.

The walls of the Kremlin itself, for instance, were painted to look like a row of small and unimportant houses. In the same way the walls of the Metropole and all other large buildings were "cut up" into a string of smaller buildings. A broad intersection of avenues close to Red Square was even turned by paint-brushes into a meadow, with a brook flowing through and cows grazing. It was very realistic. I always found it difficult to keep myself from jumping over that painted brook, and I always walked around the cows.

Now for that story about the Moscow raid. You remember that Germany and Russia were bound by a "pact of friendship," entered into by both sides, it would seem, in order to gain time to prepare for the war that both knew was inevitable. Germany knew it was inevitable because she intended to strike at her official "friend" when the moment was ripe. Russia knew it was inevitable because she knew Germany.

So while Germany was raging around the rest of Europe and preparing to strike eastward as soon as sufficient men and machines could be prepared, Russia was arming to the teeth. One of the reporters in Moscow at that time, who was generally considered the best-informed foreigner there, was the correspondent for the German D.N.B. news agency. And like the reporters of all Axis news agencies he was more than a reporter. He worked also for his country's Foreign Office: he was a spy.

It was up to him, as much as to the military intelligence officers attached to the German Embassy in Moscow, to find out how well the Russian capital was prepared to withstand a blitz from the air. He made his investigations.

Now vodka is a lubricant to German tongues as well as to those which speak other languages. And one night in the Metropole, after he had indulged in careless drinking, this man told the result of his investigations to a group of other correspondents, who sat with wooden faces, fearing that he was right, for he was very well-informed.

"When der time comes," he boasted, "dis city will be vat you Americans call some pushover. I haff been over dis city mit a fine-tooth gome. Dere iss almost no anti-airgraft equipment. It vill be vonderful."

It was not a pretty prospect. The other reporters remembered what the Luftwaffe had done to Warsaw, breaking the country's back before it fully realized that it was under attack. They remembered London, and Coventry. They remembered Rotterdam. They had not been able, either, to find any evidence of real defense of Moscow from air attack. And this German was very well-informed; he had all a professional spy's rat-hole sources of information as well as those open to honest reporters. There seemed little doubt that he was right. But the other

212 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

reporters didn't think that foreshadowed raid would be "vonderful" at all.

Then it happened.

Germany tore up the treaty of friendship. Not openly and in honest anger. Not as a challenge and a declaration. But secretly, as she held it behind her back, and while she smiled in mock amity toward her eastern neighbor. Germany struck, as is her wont, by land and also by air.

Moscow heard the big planes coming, and Moscow knew that on the German war maps she had been marked down as a second Warsaw. The German planes closed in, pirate ships of the sky riding a placid sea of search-light radiance, and there was no opposition. There was no bark of ack-ack guns, and no Russian fighter planes attempted interception.

Not, at least, until the German planes were very close. And then, suddenly, every roof in Moscow seemed to be a gun emplacement. Every public square became suddenly the site of anti-aircraft batteries. And simultaneously, down out of the high sky, dived the red-starred fighter planes of the Russian Air Force.

It was a more terrific reception than the Luftwaffe had ever met even in London. It had no similarity to the pathetic defenses of unready Warsaw. The Germans couldn't take it. They dropped their bomb loads blindly, and bombs so loosed seldom do serious harm. They turned and fled westward, stragglers being singled out by swarms of Russian fighter planes for swift destruction.

The Luftwaffe fled from that beautifully prepared reception, and up to the spring of 1943 it had never come back except for a few timid sneak attacks on the suburbs.

Some damage was caused by those unaimed bombs of the first raid, of course, like that to the façade of the Bolshoi Theater. Some Russian lives were lost. But on the

whole the raid had been the biggest flop in the history of air bombing.

The reporters in Moscow from Allied countries never had the satisfaction of asking that D.N.B. man how "vonderful" he thought the raid was. He apparently did have true information as to when the raid would come, and he had gone back to Germany a week before. I wonder what the Germans did to him.

After hearing this story from American and British reporters who were in Moscow at the time, I had a better understanding of the Russian attitude toward foreigners. I understood the official ban on "consorting" with foreigners of any nationality, whatever their countries' professions of friendship.

Russia has raised secrecy to a fine art. You just can't find out anything they don't want you to know. And we can scarcely complain, even when that program is extended to include our nationals in Russia. The man in the street can't be trusted to make his own distinctions between true friends and false, between a forthright American reporter, for instance, and a slick article like that agent of the D.N.B. So they just don't talk, and they fool even the smartest.

I was thinking about all this as I walked back to the Metropole that night from Red Square. So I walked straight into a stone pitfall made by some stairs running down from the center of the sidewalk to a basement. Such stairs in this country would be covered by steel shutters, and a bell would ring when the shutters were going to be raised. The Russians haven't thought about that. Walking in a Moscow blackout, where such unguarded sidewalk stair-wells are only one of many hazards, is like tight-rope blindfold along the edge of an

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uneven cliff. How a people with so little regard for the simple safeguards ever worked out an intricate system of air defense is beyond me.

I got home that night with a bump on my head the size of a turnip.

Perhaps it was the bump on the head, or perhaps reaction to the emotional uplift of the scenes in the churches I had visited, but I was in low spirits that night. It was cold and drafty in the dining-room, and the one light was very dim. The cabbage soup was lukewarm. When the *balik* came on, strong of smell and covered with cold sweat, my stomach rebelled. I ate some lumps of potato fried in rancid grease. The black bread without butter was the only palatable dish we had.

I felt personally affronted by this food. I mumbled to myself about lend-lease and thought this was a fine return. But then I remembered the men and women I had seen in the churches that day, pale and thin. I remembered children I had seen on the street, children with pinched faces which did not belong to childhood.

And I recalled soldiers I had passed, both men and women. Husky bodies and full pink cheeks. Clear eyes. Fine carriage.

A pattern began to form in my mind. A hollow cheek at home meant a strong arm somewhere at the front. My *balik* in the Metropole meant bacon in a trench at Stalingrad. If I hadn't already sent my *balik* away I think with this new viewpoint I would have regarded it differently. I wouldn't have eaten it—there are limits to all things—but I believe I would have saluted it as a humble reserve of the army of the home front.

Dinner the next night was far more pleasant. Four of us had it together in Walter Kerr's room, and he had a treasured half-pound of American coffee which chuckled

in a percolator and smelled like the flowers in some heavenly meadow. We carried up our dinners from downstairs, set aside the *balik* for the corridor maid, and had a feast. Ed Snow had an electric heater, and we toasted our bread on it. Henry Cassidy had been recently to a collective farm and had half a raw cabbage. I had got hold of a liter of vodka.

The heater gave a semblance of warmth to the skin, and the vodka burned pleasantly, no doubt gnawing neat holes through the lining of our stomachs. It was the first moment in Moscow I had felt thoroughly comfortable.

Henry asked me about my first impressions of Russia. And the vodka in me answered. It must have been the vodka, because I said something I had never thought of. But it was true. There apparently is as much veritas in vodka as in vino.

"My impression is," I said, "that Stalin is twelve feet tall."

It sounded sort of silly at first, because Stalin is actually just over five feet. But then I began to see where the idea had come from, and what it signified.

I had been walking around the streets of Moscow, and everywhere I went I was confronted with great posters on the sides of buildings, heroic pictures of the premier. When I went indoors, in places like the Foreign Office, there again the walls bore double-size photographs of the dictator.

I had not seen Stalin himself. I never did see Stalin. But in just a few days that subtle propaganda had entered my mind to such an extent that when I thought of Stalin I thought of a man larger than human stature.

Now, most Russians never see Stalin either. He operates on a different plan from the Fascist dictators. Mussolini likes to strut before his people. Hitler shrieks at

them in great congregations. Stalin is seldom seen in the flesh.

But plastered across Russia, from the Polish border to the Far East, from the Caucasus to the Arctic, his picture is ever before his people's eyes. And the picture is of a man double the stature of any other man. Of course they come to think of him as if he were really thus. Of course they admire and fear and reverence him beyond all others. No man has been so magnified in the minds of men since Zeus strode gigantic upon Olympus. Dr. Goebbels is just an apprentice in propaganda compared to Stalin.

The next morning I sent my first story from Moscow, and I wouldn't have known it was a story except for Natalia Petrovna. She brought the three papers to my room about ten with the cheerful announcement that there was nothing in them.

"Each of them seems to have been able to fill four pages," I told her. "I can't tell what it says, but it can't all be patent medicine ads."

"There are no patent medicine ads in Russian newspapers," she replied. She is a very literal woman. There are no ads at all in Russian papers. There is nothing to advertise.

I sat at a table pushed close to the window, but even so I had to turn on my one small light. The double windows had been sealed for the winter, and they were very dirty. And it had begun to snow. Soldiers marched, company after company, in the street below me. I don't think soldiers ever stopped marching through that street all the time I was in Moscow: Stalingrad was a very hungry battle, and its food was men. But now the throb of feet on stone was muted. The soldiers marched silently like ghosts, the ghosts they soon would be.

Natalia Petrovna sat in my one so-called easy chair and read the papers. The communiqué had nothing. There were stories from several fronts, from soldier-correspondents and reporters of the *Red Star*. I wouldn't take their statements on how wonderful the Red Army was, undoubtedly slanted as they were for home consumption. I wanted to see for myself. I made a mental note to make another stab at Polgonov, perhaps to try getting tough. I began planning an anti-Polgonov campaign as Natalia Petrovna's voice grated slowly through the columns like a rat-tail saw making hard work of an oak plank.

"So you see," she said finally, just when I had Polgonov practically on his knees, virtually begging me to go to the front, "there is nothing in the papers to-day."

I knew that Natalia Petrovna had an appointment with the hair-dresser, and I was beginning to learn something of the Russian mind, even a half-Russian mind.

"You skipped some of it," I said. "I want you to read it all and let me decide whether it's good or no good. That's what I'm here for."

She slipped on her hurt-feelings mask and turned the *Red Star* inside out. She had skipped pages two and three, which was generally a safe skip, as they didn't put much of interest there. She began reading me headlines, and I began all over again on Polgonov, gradually breaking down his resistance for the second time.

"You see?" Natalia Petrovna addressed me as Polgonov had just sent for his private car to take me to the front, with General Timoshenko as my personal guide. "You see? I told you there was nothing."

"I guess you're right," I said, unwilling to admit I had been wool-gathering. "Run along and get beautiful or a reasonable facsimile thereof."

Natalia Petrovna is as vain as most women. She con-

sidered that a compliment, and she likes compliments. Apparently she had not been fooled by my mock attention to her reading, and she decided to pay me for my compliment by forcing me to do a little work for my own good. She looked at her watch and sighed, thinking of that long line of waiting women down in the hair-dresser's. An appointment in Moscow is merely for the day, not for a particular hour.

"Don't you think there might be a story for America in that article about taking supplies across the river to Stalingrad?" she asked.

"It doesn't, I mean it didn't, sound very interesting," I hedged. "Perhaps you'd better just run through it again."

She read me then a story so stark, so simple in its portrayal of heroism, that I was shocked. This was no home-consumption stuff. No one could think this one up.

"Quick," I said. "It says that old sergeant is back in Moscow on furlough. Call the *Red Star*. Call Polgonov. Get me that sergeant."

She made the calls, and for once arrangements seemed to be simple. Within an hour I was talking to the sergeant, and he had been instructed that he could speak freely. And so I got my story of the Volga boatmen, to me one of the most exciting chapters of the whole war. And I would have missed it except for Natalia Petrovna.

The defense of Stalingrad was very difficult, the old sergeant told me, because it was built on the wrong side of the Volga. His flat, almost unwrinkled peasant face showed signs of puzzlement when he told me this. Almost all great Russian cities seemed to be on the wrong side of their rivers, he said. They were on the side nearest the Germans, and so when they were besieged all their supplies had to be taken to them across a river. All the reserves had to be ferried across. And all the wounded

had to be ferried back. It made everything very difficult.

The sergeant glowered when he told me this. I think he suspected that the Czars, under whom these cities had been built, had done this deliberately to sabotage the Bolshevik régime, long before that régime had ever been conceived. It had never entered his mind that the cities had been placed on the high bank, where the flood waters wouldn't reach them, regardless of possible future wars.

"The Volga is a big river," said the sergeant, who had probably never heard of the Mississippi, the Amazon, or the Ganges. The Volga at Stalingrad is about half a mile wide.

The sergeant told me what I didn't know, that mid-river sandbar islands block transit on both sides of the Volga bend which is the site of Stalingrad. To reach the city by boat from across the river it is necessary to steer through a narrow channel between those islands. Naturally the Germans kept that channel boiling with the hot lead of mortar shells.

It was a difficult problem in what military men call logistics, which merely means supply. Stalingrad could not be held unless the soldiers there had constant new supplies of food and ammunition. It could not be held unless the melting ranks were constantly refilled with fresh reserves.

The sergeant believes it was Stalin himself who found the solution. And it was very simple once you thought of it, the sergeant said. He didn't see how it could have failed. He wished he could think of things like that.

The solution to the problem was to mobilize the Volga boatmen, the men who knew that river better than any one else, who had lived on it all their lives, and to let them run this lethal water gauntlet; some of them surely ought to get across.

220 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

So the Volga boatmen were mobilized. The ones who had been considered too old for the army were brought from civilian life. The rest were culled from the ranks of the Red Army, brought back from the decks and engine-rooms of the Red Fleet.

Their losses were very heavy at first, because the German mortar shells fell on the east side of the river as well as in the water, and there was no protection. But in their off-time they built a village underground, deep enough so they could laugh with scorn when an enemy shell coughed harmlessly in the thick earth above their heads.

There were barracks down there, and a hospital of sorts. There was even one of those Russian baths where you make steam by throwing hot stones into a tub of water and then beat your flesh with wands. The sergeant told me he'd lived in worse places in peacetime. It was really pretty homey down there.

These Volga boatmen, wartime style, did most of their work at night. Even that, of course, was bad enough, under the fitful glare of parachute flares. But it was far worse in broad daylight, when occasionally such trips were essential. My old sergeant told me about one of those trips.

A dock on the Stalingrad side had been damaged by German shells, and it was going to be needed that night for landing fresh troops. So an order came through for some of the boatmen to go over and fix the dock.

The sergeant blew his whistle down in the subterranean barracks, and men rolled sleepily out of their bunks. He told them what the job was and asked for volunteers. The traditional thing would be to tell you how they all sprang forward as one man. It wasn't quite like that actually, though the result was the same. They didn't say anything at all, as a matter of fact. Every man simply took

one of the strips of cotton cloth that pass for socks in the Russian Army and began binding up his feet. They didn't cheer or beat their breasts with patriotic fervor or invent new speeches for a dying martyr. They just began pulling on their boots to get the dirty job done.

The sergeant had to send half of them back to bed. He made his choice carefully, selecting some because they were oft-ried and he knew he could depend on them, others because they had less experience and needed the training. About thirty of them started out in a small gunboat.

Half a mile, the sergeant told me, can be a very long distance under certain circumstances. The circumstances that day were hard. The Germans spotted them at once, of course, and mortar shells began falling all about them. Some direct hits were made, and men who half an hour ago were snug in bed, dreaming perhaps of families at home, exploded in red chunks and deepened the carmine hue of the Volga. In those days the Volga literally ran red from Stalingrad on down.

Well, the sergeant said, they kept right on until they got almost half-way across, almost to the narrow path of water between the two sand islands. Then something broke.

It wasn't anything mechanical, the sergeant said. The engines were still running, and though the gunboat was listing, the pumps could still handle the water pouring in through a few holes.

It was a human spirit that broke, and that is always a terrible thing to see.

One of the men on that boat was a younger fellow than the rest. He was only in his early twenties. And though he came of a long line of Volga boatmen, he himself had had but a few years' experience, a few years in which to absorb

the traditions. The sergeant knew he needed tempering in fire, so he had given him the toughest job of all: he'd made him helmsman.

Now it is a difficult thing to grasp a wheel in shivering hands and hold a straight course dead-on into a hurricane of bursting shells that are killing men all around you. If you can do it once, you will never again have that precise degree of fear. You can be depended on after that to carry through any job at all.

Since I came home from Russia I have noticed a peculiar reaction here to deeds of heroism by Red Army soldiers. They have performed so many deeds of heroism that it has become commonplace; it is expected of them. They have become to us a sort of supermen, and we no longer give them credit for doing things which would bring amazed applause if others did them. I find an attitude toward Russian soldiers almost like that we have for some of the so-called cold-blooded animals. Our response to their deeds, even their deaths, is almost that of the fisherman who assures you that the fish doesn't really feel the hook. "They aren't made like us"—that sort of thing.

I mention this now because I know that it will seem almost incredible to you (since it is about a Russian soldier) when I tell you that the young apprentice helmsman of the Volga gunboat broke under the strain.

Suddenly he spun the wheel and ran the boat up on the sand of the downstream island, on the side away from the Germans. And when the other men turned on him with faces washed of all signs of emotion by their amazement, he screamed at them hysterically.

"I'm not going any farther," he shouted. "I can't stand it. I apparently think more of my life than you fools do. The only way I will go now is back."

In any wartime army such an act would bring court-

martial. The verdict might be anything from death to long imprisonment, discharge under disgrace, or perhaps immurement in a hospital for the mentally unstable. In Russia, in the Red Army, justice moves more swiftly.

When something like that happens—and the Russians really are human, and so such things do happen—the soldiers present at the time automatically become a court-martial, and summary trial is held on the spot. Sometimes not even words are necessary; just an exchange of glances, a nodding of heads. So it was that day on the Volga sandbar.

The verdict was passed and justice meted out.

"I carried out the verdict myself," the old sergeant told me in a flat tone.

That single pistol shot must have been almost soundless through all the thunder of the exploding shells. Then the gunboat was pushed off the sand, another man took the helm, and the journey was completed to the west bank of the river. The dock was repaired, and the gunboat came back. The men crawled down into their underground homes, took off their boots and the binding from their feet, and rolled back into bed. But there were many vacant bunks which were still warm, so little time had all this taken. And the bunk of the young helmsman—of course that was empty, too.

I was a little doubtful about how much of this story the censors would permit, even though the essentials of it were printed in *Red Star*. That might have been merely to serve as warning to all Russians what the fate was of those who put safety before service. To admit to the world at large that Russians, too, occasionally break under the strain was something else.

I decided that the best way to feel out the Soviet cen-

sorship was to shoot the works. So I wrote the story in full, and it came back to me with only a word here and there deleted. During the time I was in Russia I found the censorship on the whole no more rigid, nor any more inept, than the censorship of the British or the French or the American army. It was sometimes a little slow in Moscow, because neither of the censors had more than an elementary knowledge of English and they had to refer frequently to their dictionaries. But that happens everywhere, even with the English when they are passing on American copy.

I remember a very Oxford little censor who popped his head out of his office in Arras in the first part of the war to ask me what in the world a shavetail was.

I was rather pleased with my Volga boatmen story, so pleased that my spirits were not even dampened when Natalia Petrovna told me somewhat pointedly that she had been so late she had been unable to get her hair fixed, even though she had waited in the shop four hours.

And the day was made perfect by the arrival from Teheran that night of Eddy Gilmore. He was sunburned right over the top of his Farley head, and he actually seemed glad to be back at work, even under the rather grim living conditions of the Metropole. I never knew such a man for work.

During the rest of the time I was in Moscow, I would often seek Eddy out. I get depressed when I am cold and hungry and frustrated in my work. Eddy has a temperament that apparently nothing can disturb.

I'd go to his room of a late afternoon, and there he'd be, generally with half a dozen others in the room, and there was more warmth in his smile than in a score of smuggled electric heaters.

He had a Russian three-cornered balalaika that he

strummed with his fingers like a ukulele. And he knows every Negro plantation song ever written.

Eddy is the only one of all that group in Moscow who didn't turn, whatever their nationality, into melancholy Danes. Not that he's one of these sweetness and light, Pollyanna boys. He was probably the most expert of all with those rumor rabbits I told you about. But he used them only against pettiness and downright meanness. I wouldn't want to say for sure, but I suspect it was he that sent the man who had held up his colleagues' copy goose-chasing off to Kuibyshev.

The following morning I paid strict attention to Natalia Petrovna's reading of the papers, but they were full of drivel and hoop-la that didn't have the germ of an idea. So she really got somewhere near the head of the line at the hairdresser's that day.

I filled in time calling at the Embassy, which was a good way to practise getting around town. Wherever possible on my foreign assignments I use taxis, explaining the cost to my New England conscience by telling it how much of my valuable time I am saving for my office by this small outlay.

Generally I can beat my conscience down with that one, though I had a hard time in India. I spent an average of about fifteen dollars a day on taxis there, and my conscience had a nasty habit of whispering to me that it certainly was news that my time was as valuable as that.

I could keep the conscience in its place very easily in Russia, however. There are no taxis in Russia, nor even droshkies any more. They've all gone to war, and the only means of transportation in Moscow are trolleys, buses, and the subway.

It's a beautiful subway, almost as deep as it is long. It's so deep that it's the official air-raid shelter throughout

its length, and Stalin has even made speeches down there when he had reason to expect an air raid.

The American Embassy was a tonic in those days because Pat Hurley was there, and where Pat Hurley is, there is also laughter. Give me Pat Hurley and Eddy Gilmore as companions, and I will keep my spirits and my love of life under any conditions.

General Hurley had been sent to Moscow on one of those rather unexplainable "missions," carrying a letter from President Roosevelt to Premier Stalin. The latter certainly never seemed in any hurry to receive those letters. In fact, Uncle Joe proved that he could go for months without reading them.

Long before I got there, General Follette M. Bradley of the United States Air Force had flown in in a great Liberator bomber with one of those letters. He was kept hanging around for almost two months, until his letter must have been frayed and worn. He said before he finally left that he had delivered it, but I was never convinced that he didn't just have to deliver it by simply leaving it marked "Please forward" on a Kremlin table.

The Hurley mission wasn't as showy as the Bradley one. He just had a DC-3 instead of a Liberator, and two Texas boys made up his crew instead of the dozen pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and gunners who accompanied Bradley. But while it wasn't as showy, there also didn't seem to be even as much reason for it. We couldn't figure out just what there was for Mr. Roosevelt to tell Mr. Stalin that he had to send under separate seal by a Southern Republican instead of through his own Ambassador.

Most of the boys seemed to think the trip was more or less a reward for a couple of really outstanding jobs Hurley had done.

He was Secretary of War under Hoover, you remember, and before that he had a fine military record as a First World War colonel. He's always been knee-deep in politics, and as I said he's a Southern Republican. His home is Tulsa, Oklahoma, now, but his folks came from Texas and his Republicanism is inherited. He says himself that there's no Republican like a Southern Republican for being Republican all the way through.

Democrats have a saying that any Republican is a mean enough varmint, but any ordinary antidote like milk is enough to neutralize the sting of the common variety. The bite of a Southern Republican, they say, is apt to be fatal.

Mr. Roosevelt, however, has shown long before he ever took up politically with Pat Hurley that he doesn't much care what a man's political complexion is so long as he's the best man for a job. Secretaries Knox and Stimson are pretty good proof of that.

So when Mr. Roosevelt decided he ought to have an envoy to New Zealand he picked Pat Hurley. And later, when General MacArthur was giving the Japanese a first lesson in American fortitude on Bataan, the President picked Hurley to do a job that was perhaps not even second in daring to General Jimmie Doolittle's assignment to bomb Tokyo. Pat Hurley was asked to lead an unescorted supply convoy to the Philippines with supplies for MacArthur's lost-cause heroes. And he did it. If you didn't happen to read the rather scanty notices of that tremendous exploit and just can't believe it, look behind Pat Hurley's ear next time you see him. There's a hole there you could nest a robin in. It was made by a shell fragment. A Japanese shell fragment.

Well, this day I'm telling you about in Moscow, Pat was in usual story-telling fettle. He loves to tell a story,

and he tells them fine. He'll never pass up a good story just because it's on himself. This time he was telling about his first public appearance in New Zealand.

It was, naturally, an occasion to have an American Minister appointed to that far island dominion, and the New Zealanders dignified it by asking Pat to address the joint houses of parliament. He did, with trimmings.

To appreciate this fully, one should know what Hurley looks like. He's just a one-star general, actually, but he's got the looks, the bearing, the charm of a full general, with enough left over for a couple of mere major generals.

Standing over six feet, and standing very straight with broad shoulders and a solid frame, Pat has white hair and a white military moustache. Being an old soldier myself I always have a tendency to come to attention if Pat Hurley just walks into the room.

"Well," he said that day in Moscow, apparently impervious to the cold, though the rest of us were shivering in the high drafty reception room of the American Embassy, "I really gave them the works that day in the New Zealand Parliament. And I meant every word of it, too; they're great people.

"I started out with a little appreciation of their way of life, and then I really began to pour it on, just the way I felt in my heart.

"'Gentlemen,' I said, 'your way of life is our way of life. We are all fighting this war, fighting it together, to preserve that way of life. I have been sent here as my country's representative to your country. And I can tell you that we will help you preserve your way of life, which is also ours. I pledge you the production, the wealth, the blood if necessary of one hundred and thirty million people to that end.'"

Hurley paused after that and smiled at us, as though waiting for an audience to break into applause.

"I thought that was pretty good myself," he said. "In fact, I thought it was very good. They really gave me what you could honestly call an ovation.

"But I wanted something a little more personal than that. I wanted some one I knew to slap me on the back and tell me what a great speech it was. So when I ran into one of the military boys from the legation later in the day I sort of angled for it. I asked him how the speech had gone. He said it was okay, or something sort of non-committal like that. But I was really hungry for that pat on the back, so I pushed him.

"I said didn't he think it was great . . . well, pretty good. I said the New Zealanders seemed to be pleased with it. And this fellow said to me: 'Oh, sure they were pleased with it. Hell, you gave them everything in America except your own stock in the Richfield Oil Company.'"

Pat was still in Moscow when I left, still waiting for a chance to hand his letter to Stalin. The premier was very busy indeed by that time, of course, the big push having started from Stalingrad. I imagine Pat had to mark his letter "Please forward," too.

I'd just got back to my hotel room from the Embassy when I got a telephone call from the Foreign Office. Polgonov's secretary told me he had arranged for me to talk to some one about the guerrillas. Would I please go to the Foreign Office at eight o'clock that evening?

And this was the country where I had been told it was impossible to get anything done! Yet here it was less than two days since I made my request, and already it was complied with. I called Natalia Petrovna and told her she'd have to go along with me as interpreter.

"I know," she said. "Mr. Snow just called me and asked if I could interpret for both of you; his secretary is sick."

"Wait a minute," I said. "Much as I like Ed Snow, what's he doing cutting in on my story? Did you tell him I was trying to get this interview? You ought to know better than that, Natalia Petrovna."

But it turned out it wasn't quite that way. Ed wasn't the chiseler; it was I. It seems that Ed had asked for the very same sort of information about the partizans two weeks ago, before I'd ever reached Moscow. I'd just caught on to the tail of his kite by making a similar request at the very moment when the slow wheels of the Foreign Office were almost in the act of grinding out what he had ordered. And Polgonov, knowing little of the customs or ethics of our business, as we interpreted them, was killing two birds with one stone.

It was very unfair, because I was working for I.N.S., which has news wires that are never still, and for N.B.C., which by the magic of radio can dissolve time and distance, whereas Ed works for the *Satevepost* which has a deadline measured in weeks. I got hold of Ed and offered to withdraw, but he said he didn't see why I should. I didn't press the point, and so we three went up the hill through the snowy blackout together right after supper.

At the Foreign Office Polgonov was waiting. He took us to a small, unheated room which was the cubicle of one of the daytime censors. There were two men in the room. Polgonov said they were both guerrilla leaders, recently come to Moscow through the German lines. This was better luck than we'd dreamed of.

One of the men was a civilian, in the semi-military uniform of dark breeches, boots, and blouse affected especially by political workers. He was a man in the early forties, with dark hair, even features, and very penetrat-

ing black eyes. A quiet man but a dangerous one, I decided.

He rolled a cigaret deftly with one hand, his right, and I liked him less. This slight revulsion was due partly to the one-hand act: what need had a Russian guerrilla to ape the Hollywood cowboys? It was increased by the fact that his fingernails were very dirty, which seemed scarcely necessary back in the safety of the capital.

At this point of my impression-recording he suddenly shifted his position, which brought his left arm into view. Where the hand should have been there was a neat bandage, very white, very recently changed.

I forgave him then, silently but very humbly, for the things I had held against him in that first false impression. Naturally he rolled his cigarets with one hand. And though that trick can no doubt be quickly learned under necessity, no one has yet devised a way for a man with one hand to clean his fingernails. There was evidently no one to do it for him. His wound would be dressed all right, but there were others waiting in line with other wounds; there was no time to stop that sort of thing for a manicure.

This man's name, Polgonov said, was Kharmalov, Alexei Grigorievitch Kharmalov, and he came from the region of Minsk.

Something clicked in my head, some little bell of memory tinkled, and I looked a question at Natalia Petrovna. She shrugged. In the communiqués she had read me there was frequent mention of a guerrilla leader from the area of Minsk who was designated only as Comrade K.

"*C'est Tovarish K?*" I whispered to Polgonov and he nodded.

"*C'est lui, vraiment,*" he whispered back. "*Il est le plus*

courageux, le plus dangereux de tous. C'est bon pour vous, n'est-ce pas?"

"C'est les noisettes," I assured him.

Polgonov and I got along fine in French.

Our other guerrilla was as different from Comrade K as if they had been children of different worlds. He was in field uniform, and he seemed very young for a senior lieutenant. Too young also for the cameo of the Order of Lenin which he wore on his left breast. The Order of Lenin is the Soviet Victoria Cross or Congressional Medal. On his right breast were two ribbons in deep maroon, each one representing a grievous wound.

Polgonov said this man, or boy, was named Ivan Ivanovitch Serebriakov and that he was a peasant from the soggy peat-bogs of Smolensk. He needn't have told us he was a peasant. If I ever saw a peasant face it was this one: flat, expressionless, unmasking and unyielding. His eyes were set too far apart, and they were windows opening on a blank wall. You could look through them and realize that nothing much was going on inside his head. I suggested to Natalia Petrovna that she get the older man talking first; the young one, I suspected, would be tough going.

I remember that it was very cold in that room. The blackout curtains were drawn, of course, but we could hear the snow scratching at the windows as though with clawed and frozen fingers.

Comrade K spoke with a gentle and pleasant voice. He told his story as though it were about some one else. It seemed at the time as if it must be about some one else. The Comrade K of the communiqués was a wild man who threw hand grenades into the windows of German mess-halls. He lived in swamps and struck at night with knife or knuckles against men armed with guns. He set the

torch to German headquarters and from the dark outside taunted the victims, daring them to run out to the certain death of his sniper's pistol.

This Comrade K who sat with us was a mild man, speaking in mild tones as though recounting a savage legend which he himself scarcely believed.

He was too young to be in the First World War, but old enough to feel the bitterness of his country's collapse, thoughtful enough to figure out to his own satisfaction that it was not the fault of the Russian people but of their outmoded government.

He was a peasant, and he well knew that under the Czars the peasant of White Russia had little chance of more than the barest necessities of life. He threw in his lot with the Bolsheviks and fought as a citizen soldier to help set up the Red régime.

And under the Reds he prospered. He was able to attend an agricultural college, and he took his degree with honor. As the years passed he became a figure of prominence in his village near Minsk. When this war began he held a position comparable to that of mayor of rather a sizable agricultural district.

He was not called to the army. He was more useful as a party worker. And of course he was over forty and had a wife and two children, which was considered cause for some deferment in those days.

Then Germany struck at Russia and came rolling across Poland to invade White Russia. There was time for some of the population to escape. Kharmalov could have moved eastward ahead of the Germans. But by then, he said, he realized he had a mission to perform. So he sent his family east, and he stayed, keeping with him a group of carefully selected farmers and artisans. They let the German flood roll over them.

234 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Kharmalov thus formed what was one of the very first guerrilla bands. He and his companions retired to the marshes they knew so well and began equipping themselves. The system was simple and effective.

The main German supply line ran through Minsk. There was no mile of the Minsk-Moscow highway west of the German front line that didn't have its convoy of trucks, its tanks and armored cars, its kitchens and its medical wagons. Those drivers had to sleep. Comrade K and his men began preying on this supply line, stabbing sentries, seizing what they could, and melting into the darkness.

As their arsenal grew they recruited new members for their band. They became formidable and engaged in occasional open battles with enemy detachments. Some of them were killed, others wounded. They had no doctors with them.

But they had captured medicine, and Kharmalov told of sitting in his swamp hideaway studying the labels on bottles and boxes. He recalled a little Latin from his courses at the agricultural school, and he translated the labels as best he could. Sometimes, he said, he guessed aright what some of the medicines were for. Sometimes his Latin was faulty and he guessed wrong. Some of their wounded survived such treatment.

When Comrade K had recruited his band to several hundred, and their supplies included not only guns but even staff cars and a tank or two, he realized that he must specialize. The old, unorganized, hit-and-run days of indiscriminate raiding were gone.

He selected trains and staff headquarters as his specialties. The trains were easy. The tracks were mined at night and then the guerrilla band merely waited in the dark until a supply or troop train came along heading for the front.

The mines blew the engine off the tracks. The train stopped. The troops came pouring out. And Kharmalov's men pressed the triggers of their machine-guns and mowed them down. After that the train would be looted and then set afire. Simple, really, Kharmalov told me.

The raids on headquarters were more difficult to organize. Such places were hard to locate, in the first place, and once located it was difficult to achieve surprise because of the sentries.

Kharmalov decided it was time to organize a women's auxiliary, and a children's branch, of his guerrilla army.

The whole country in which he operated was in German hands, of course, but there still remained a sizable civilian population in the villages. It was impossible for the Germans to keep all those people behind barbed wire. If they even suspected that any of the villagers were working against them, the Germans made full use of their firing squads.

But a woman walking along a road with a basket on her arm looks innocent enough, and who is to tell that her eyes are always open and her ears alert? What is the difference in appearance between a young boy or girl sauntering aimlessly about in childish curiosity and the same boy or girl nosing out the position of German company or regimental division?

Kharmalov taught these women and children what he wanted to know and how to get their information. They made their reports to him at night in the swamps.

When all was ready for an attack, the woman or boy or girl would lead the way. And behind, like flitting shadows, crept the guerrillas. If a sentry called, the auxiliary would reply with some story of an errand to perform in the neighborhood. As the sentry came forward to investigate he would be suddenly overwhelmed, choked

before he could cry out, killed before he knew how he had been trapped.

So they made their way to the designated headquarters, generally a house well hidden in the forest. Then Kharmalov would give a whoop, and the guerrillas would storm the place. Grenades would fly in every window. Torches would be flung to the roof. Sharpshooters back in the darkness would pick off the inmates one by one as they rushed to safety.

They didn't always kill, these guerrillas. A certain sampling of their victims they took alive and sent forward through the German lines to be questioned in Moscow by Red Army intelligence officers.

The front in Russia stretches almost two thousand miles. It can't be guarded by more than roving patrols at many points. And so the guerrillas kept in frequent touch with Moscow, delivered their prisoners, made their reports, and received instructions.

Comrade K told us all this in his gentle voice, talking a few minutes and then twisting up another cigarette and smoking while Natalia Petrovna translated what he had said. Through her I asked him about his wound, and he waved that bandaged stump of a wrist. He tried to make an airy, deprecating gesture with it as though to show that it was of no importance. But I was sure I saw him wince as the motion made the blood pound.

"It was an explosive bullet," he said. "During a raid. It blew my hand right off. It wasn't healing well, so I thought I'd better come back here and have it fixed up."

Come back here. As though it were a routine journey of no importance. Come back here meant traveling several hundred miles through several hundred thousand Germans, hiding by day, crawling often on all fours, or all threes for Kharmalov, by night.

"And you are through now?" I asked. "You won't have any more guerrilla fighting now?"

He laughed out loud at that. I realized it was the first hearty laugh I could remember having heard since I got to Russia.

"Of course I will go back," he said. "It only takes one hand to shoot a pistol or throw a grenade or swing a knife."

It all seemed so unreal, sitting in that little ice-box of a room, snug and safe as safety goes these days, and talking in such matter-of-fact tones of violent death by night. I was impressed by Comrade K's story, but only later did I learn the magnitude of the guerrilla fighting.

Comrade K commanded but one of thousands of such guerrilla bands. And official Russian figures credit these guerrillas with having killed at least a quarter of a million Germans up to the beginning of 1943.

A quarter of a million may not sound like so much when it is remembered that the Axis had some three million soldiers in Russia at that time. But the drain on the Axis armies due to guerrilla activities was much greater than that. They had spread fear behind the German lines, and large forces which would otherwise have been at the front had to be kept in rear positions for police work.

And the guerrilla raids had a definitely demoralizing effect on the common German soldier. Kharmalov showed me a letter he said he had taken from the uniform of one man he killed. It was a letter written to the soldier's family in Germany. It said:

"It is not so bad fighting the Russian soldiers. We expected that, and are trained for it. But these bandits who call themselves partizans or avengers are far worse. Death lurks behind every bush."

238 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

All the time that Comrade K had been talking, Ivan Ivanovitch had been sitting very straight in his chair, and sometimes his lips moved as though he were repeating a lesson. When at last he was asked to speak he launched on a tale which had all the sound of a memorized lesson. It was like a parrot talking. I don't for a minute think he had had this tale taught him; it was too personal for that. But I think he must have spent hours in going over it in his own mind and getting his story letter perfect.

"My name is Ivan Ivanovitch Serebriakov," he began, though he had been introduced to us by Polgonov. "I am twenty-three years old and have been in the Red Army seven years. My people are peasants from the province of Smolensk, but the Soviet régime gave me the opportunity to rise to the grade of senior lieutenant."

Natalia Petrovna was recording in shorthand, and when she translated this much I had a sure feeling that we were in for a long panegyric about the Soviet régime unless we headed it off.

"Ask him how he got to be a guerrilla," I suggested.

He talked on and on, and the rest of us smoked and shivered.

"He says," Natalia Petrovna told us finally, "that he was in the battle of Smolensk. That was October of 1941. He was holding a hill with a small detachment. The line broke on both sides of him, and he was isolated. He was also shot through the stomach.

"It was impossible for his men to get back to the Russian lines, so he told his men to pick him up and make for some woods on the German side. They got there. So they became guerrillas."

It was as simple as that. Ivan Ivanovitch was shot through the stomach, so he went into some woods and became a guerrilla.

"I could use a few details on that," I told Natalia Petrovna.

Ivan Ivanovitch talked some more, his flat face expressionless.

"He says," we were told, "that he was not sure of their position and he didn't know the country west of Smolensk. He lived east of the city, and he had never traveled much. So the first night he sent his men out to kill some Germans and bring back maps. Then they built a litter and carried him where he directed them with the help of those maps and a compass he always carried, deeper into the forest. He says he was delirious most of the time but that they got on very well because if his men ran out of orders they would just set the litter down and wait till he had a lucid period.

"Finally they met another group of soldiers who were in the same fix as themselves and they joined forces. And one of those soldiers was an army doctor. So he fixed up Ivan Ivanovitch's wound. It was pretty bad by then, and there had to be a lot of cutting."

Natalia Petrovna looked up from her notes at this point to interject a comment of her own.

"These Russian peasants," she said, "are very strong. It is very difficult to kill them."

Healed at last, Ivan Ivanovitch set up headquarters in the forest and planned campaigns against the Germans. Smolensk had fallen by that time, and Ivan Ivanovitch knew that his home, where his aged mother had been left while he and his father served in the army, was in the occupied area. He had something personal to fight for.

And this guerrilla band was no hit-or-miss thing like the avengers under Comrade K. Ivan Ivanovitch was an officer, and all his men were soldiers. They planned with maps, and they struck as a unit. They recruited only from

240 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

among other isolated soldiers. They soon had what amounted to a full regiment. And they had half a dozen tanks, a sizable column of armored cars and supply wagons. They finally even got three observation planes.

"But surely you didn't wear your uniforms," I said. "You can't go marching around behind an enemy's lines in your own uniforms."

Ivan Ivanovitch gave me the answer out of some army textbook that he evidently carried in his head.

"An officer of the Red Army," he said, "takes an oath that he will never lay aside his uniform. He will live in it and, if necessary, die in it."

But he did have an explanation as to how such a unit as his could exist behind the enemy lines. The main highway to Smolensk from the west, he said, was occupied by the Germans. But they had gone through very fast, and it was not possible for them to occupy the whole country. No German soldier, he said, would dare stray as much as half a mile from the highway. Only large bodies of troops, a punitive expedition, dared do that, and such columns were what the little army led by Ivan Ivanovitch lay in wait for.

I liked that picture, sketched in so undramatically by this flat-faced peasant boy. Can't you see the arrogant German column—staff cars, reconnaissance cars, armored cars, troop trucks—whirling along a lateral road bent on razing some village which was suspected of defiance?

And then out from a patch of woods comes the avenging army of Ivan Ivanovitch. Not here the ragged civilians, the women and children, of Comrade K. Here comes a military unit with tanks and mortars and machine-guns, with infantry armed with automatic rifles. And there is a battle right there, far behind the lines. What a war this is!

I asked Ivan Ivanovitch if he had ever heard about his mother, how she was faring in the little village where he was born.

"She is dead," he said tonelessly. And then again, as he continued, I got the impression that he was parroting. Whom? How do I know.

"The Germans demanded that she and all the other villagers turn over supplies of grain they were believed to have buried in the ground," he said. "My mother refused. First they cut out her tongue. Then they put out her eyes. Finally they decapitated her."

I know that this is an atrocious war. I know that men were tied in oil-soaked bundles and burned in Burma. I know that countless women have been ravaged, children slaughtered to break the spirits of their parents, men and women murdered to warn a population against uprising. But I still question each particular atrocity story. I still doubt every one. And the fake atrocity story is, of course, a common weapon of the propagandist. I asked Ivan Ivanovitch how he knew this about his mother.

"Some soldiers came to my partizan unit who had been in my village," he replied. "They told me. It is a fact."

I still don't know if it is true that the Germans mutilated and killed that old woman for an iron pot full of grain. But the important thing is that Ivan Ivanovitch believed it. All Russians believe that German soldiers commit such atrocities at every opportunity. They don't ask for absolute proof in each instance. They have seen enough instances so that they believe all of which they hear only the vaguest rumors. I would not care to be a German when the Russians finally swarm into the Reich. Rivers of blood have flowed already in this war; they are flowing now. But over the horizon of the days there is a crimson flood. . . .

242 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

Ed Snow asked if the partizan units such as Ivan Ivanovitch's were organized, their activities correlated, by a central organization. I have heard other reporters say that Ed knows more about China than Chiang Kai-shek, and he said now that in China guerrilla warfare had been so organized.

Ivan Ivanovitch said there was little such organization. That was one of the things he had come back to Moscow to discuss. But at the present the Moscow command did little more than send printed instructions, a sort of handbook of guerrilla warfare. These were dropped by planes or carried through the lines at night by young volunteers. These handbooks, however, deal solely with the formation and activities of separate units—methods of fighting, instruction in the use of captured German weapons, and things like that—not with any effort at concerted action.

Ed asked another question that provided the jewel of all Ivan Ivanovitch's rubber-stamp phrases. Ed asked whether Russia would be able to carry on if the Germans should move still further east and take the whole of European Russia.

"History," said Ivan Ivanovitch, "would not permit Germany to do that."

Comrade K and Ivan Ivanovitch, it developed, were also staying at the Metropole while they were in Moscow. But when we prepared to leave the Foreign Office, they made excuses to delay their departure. Their permission, their assignment, to talk with us, was limited by the four walls of that one little ice-box room. Walking back to the hotel with us would have been "consorting with foreigners."

Just inside the street door we handed to an armed guard our regular press passes and our curfew passes. He

read them carefully, checking each of our faces against the photographs on our passes. He did this three and four times a day. An American wouldn't have bothered once he was familiar with a face; the Russians never relaxed.

It was very cold outside, and it was snowing. It had been snowing for days, hard crystals that melted slowly even if you pulled off a glove and let them fall on your warm hand. By the time the first flakes so caught had melted, your hand would be so cold that the falling snow lay in your palm like splinters of glass.

Such snow in London or New York, or perhaps even Berlin, would long before have piled high in gutters, even where the streets themselves were kept open. But in Moscow there was never more than a film, a brittle and squeaky film, underfoot.

You see, the battle of Stalingrad was then at its height. A great many of the supplies for that battle, a great many of the men, had to pass through Moscow. The Moscow streets simply had to be kept open.

A country as hard pressed for gasoline as Russia is can not afford to use motorized snow-clearing equipment. A country with such man-power and woman-power needs at farm and factory and front as Russia has cannot afford to draw upon its able-bodied to sweep the streets.

But in every country there is a great army of the aged, an army of what in most countries are considered unemployables. The men of that class in Russia are used as waiters, porters, guards in such jobs as demand only vigilance and not strength. There are still the white-haired women, the grandmothers of gnarled hands and bent backs, the old women with slow and painful but very patient feet.

When the snow falls in Moscow, or any other place in Russia where snow must not be allowed to pile, these

women come creeping from their cold chimney-corners. With brooms and little shovels they gather up the snow almost as it falls. They are the locusts devouring King Winter's crop.

The snow is shoveled into boxes tied to children's sleds. It is pulled away by those tired hands, those slow and painful feet. It is packed in back yards, dumped into sewers, hidden where it impedes neither the wheels of the supply trains nor the feet of marching men.

Even throughout the curfew hours of the blackout night these crones never relaxed their efforts. Walking down the hill from the Foreign Office that night, walking close to the curb so we wouldn't fall into any of those unguarded stairs along the building line, we could hear the scraping, the sweeping, the shuffling steps of this battle of woman against snow.

"But what makes them do it?" I asked Natalia Petrovna. "Is it because their grandsons are at Stalingrad? Is it patriotism in purest form? You can't force work like this from such people. You can't threaten people whose days are already numbered. Why do they do it?"

Natalia Petrovna can be emotional. She can even be sentimental on certain subjects. But she also has a strong streak of the Russian realism that is the keystone of their character.

"This is the only way such women can get a worker's ration card," she said. "Take a look at a non-worker's ration card and you will know why these women welcome the chance to shovel snow. In Russia it is not considered that any one who does not work needs very much food."

When I left Russia I came direct to America, flying all the way, and so I was able to make comparisons easily. I came home in the days of the first hubbub about war-factory absenteeism. Those were the days of efforts to

put through work-or-fight legislation. The Russians were so far ahead of us. They said work or go hungry. And there was work.

I certainly hope that the war will never inflict on us such hardship as the Russian people have endured. I hope we may never have to draft the failing strength of the aged and infirm. I hope their chimney corners may always be warm and that they may enjoy their well-earned rest.

But for the able-bodied, the men and women who take on the responsibility of war work and then shirk, what system could be more effective than the Russian system? Cancel the ration book of a few proved shirkers, cut them down to half rations because if they only work half time they don't need the strength of full-time workers. Let that happen, and I believe that absenteeism would fall off to an extent that would make it negligible.

But put such shirkers in the army: for heaven's sake, no! Better to let them live like leeches, fattening on the blood from the open wounds of dying soldiers. Ours is a national army, like that of Russia. Ours, too, is an army of proud men and women giving everything they have for an ideal. Make service in that army a punishment instead of a privilege, and you will have made an army ripe for defeat.

The parents of every soldier in our army to-day, of every American girl in any of the service auxiliaries, are proud, and every one glories in their pride. How will those parents feel if people begin looking at them with sympathy, asking in look if not in word where their children failed of duty that they should have been sent to fight?

Of course, very often I think, absenteeism is due to the failings of a selfish or at least thoughtless management. We could learn how to handle that from the Russians, too.

Walking down the hill from the Foreign Office after talking to the Russian guerrillas, walking through those unseen but ever-present snow-shovelers, I determined to get after the story of Russian food. I knew my stay in Russia was to be brief; I wanted to have that knowledge to stack up against our own food problem when I got home.

Other things were to intervene, however, and it was not until just before I finally left Russia that I got the complete story of its food situation.

The day following my talk with the guerrillas the front pages of all three newspapers were splashed with the text of a special decree setting up a war bill commission. At first reading I wasn't much impressed with it as a story for cabling or broadcasting. But the more I talked it over with Natalia Petrovna and got her slant on the thing, and the more I pondered on what lay between the lines, the more important I decided it was.

On the face of it, it merely set up a government commission to document a detailed bill of all the damage done by Germany in Russia. That sounded like a document for presentation at the peace table.

But between the lines I sensed a searing bitterness, a burning hate that had little smack of peace-table talk. This, I decided, was something that Russia was going to settle for herself. This, it seemed to me, was a design for vengeance. This was eye-for-an-eye stuff.

The special commission appointed to draw up this bill was a cross-section of Russia. There were women named to it, scientists, teachers, artists, agriculturalists, government officials, industrial experts, generals, and even an archbishop.

Natalia Petrovna told me that this was the first time in the twenty-five years of the Bolshevik régime that a priest

had been named to any official organization. Stalin, who was trained for the priesthood himself and would have become a priest but for the war and revolution that hurled him into politics instead, was apparently passing up no segment of his people in forming this commission.

The duties of the commission were given in detail. They were to make all possible investigations, to hold any necessary inquiries. They were to send representatives wherever they thought necessary, to question whom they wished. And they were to list every depredation, every atrocity, every Russian forced into slave labor, every bit of looting and theft, every piece of property destroyed, every church desecrated, every man, woman, or child killed or injured.

The document was very precise, except in disclosing what was to be done with it when it was finished. It was a war bill, but when was it to be presented, and by whom, and in what manner?

I had Natalia Petrovna get Polgonov on the phone, and I asked him. He took that familiar the-decree-speaks-for-itself attitude. No help from him. There would be no help from any one else. So I decided to use an old trick to find out just what this decree meant.

It seemed to me important to find out, because I had a suspicion that it was a signpost to just what we might expect from Russia if she should drive the Germans out of Russia. Looking back, I am interested to note that I had already been so impressed with Russian determination and Russian strength that it didn't seem fantastic to me that they should be planning what to do after the Germans were chased out. They were a very long way from being chased out right then. They were stabilized a hundred miles west of Moscow itself. They were in Stalin-grad, and if they ever got across the Volga there was little

to stop another major eastward advance. Yet it seemed natural to me that the Russians would soon kick them out.

Well, the trick I decided to use was this: Censorship is differently applied by different countries. Some, for instance, take the position that they have nothing to do with the truth or falsehood of a despatch. They see their sole duty as being to prevent any despatches that are harmful to them, regardless of truth or falsehood. Other censors, however, will not pass a story that they know to be false, even if it might serve to help them. They will stop a story that is true, if they don't want that story to get out. But they will not pass any story that they know to be false.

I had been in Russia long enough to know that the Moscow censors operate on the latter program.

So I wrote my story of the new commission as I thought I was right in interpreting it. If it was passed I would know I had guessed right. Of course it might be killed even if it was right, if the government did not want people to know what was in their minds.

I wrote the story that Stalin had appointed an official commission to draw up an eye-for-an-eye war bill. I said this bill was expected to be presented for immediate payment on the points of Russian bayonets as soon as the German border was crossed.

I turned that story in at the Foreign Office and sat down to wait in the general news room where we all had our desks. Henry Cassidy had a little electric heater near his desk, and I went over and sat by that. Every one was working with his hat and coat on. Some of the secretaries wore gloves with just the ends of the fingers cut off so they could type.

Messengers came in and out. Reporters went into Polgonov's office and came out looking either angry or resigned. Time passed. Copy was sent in to the censors and

came out again, stamped for the telegraph office and with words or lines or whole paragraphs cut with blue pencil. But my copy didn't come out.

Finally I asked about it, to make sure it hadn't been lost, and was told it had been "referred." That could mean almost anything. I pleased my vanity by imagining that it was so important, so explosive, that the censors had sent it straight to Stalin himself. At least it couldn't have taken longer if it had been sent to Stalin. It was four hours before I got my copy back.

When I did get it there was no mark on the paper I had not made myself except the censor's rubber stamp of approval and his written initials.

You may not share my conclusions. But from what I know of the Russian system of censorship, I accept their passing my story as acknowledgment that they have no intention of waiting for peace-table settlement of their bill against Germany

That explained to my satisfaction a good deal about their treatment of foreigners, their insistence on fighting alone on the Russian front.

Certainly if Russia had wanted it we would have sent troops, at least air force personnel, as well as material aid to Russia. Britain would as certainly have done the same. Neither of us would have missed such an opportunity to tie Russia closer to us in coöperative effort against the Axis.

But Russia would have none of us. It would take all the war materials, all the civilian supplies we could send. But it definitely didn't want our men.

After I decided that I had smoked out their intentions toward Germany, their plan for eye-for-an-eye vengeance, I thought I began to see some method in their apparently mad rejection of our total aid.

If the army that crossed from Russia into Germany was an Allied army, composed of British and American troops as well as Russians, the Anglo-American leaders would naturally feel that they should have something to say about what should happen next.

But Russia, I decided, didn't want any one to tell them what to do next when they crossed the German frontier. They knew what they intended to do, and they wanted no brakes applied by any one who had earned the right to advise them in accompanying them in their march of victory.

Germany has slaughtered millions of Russians, mostly soldiers, of course, but a great many civilians, too. They have burned and sacked cities and towns and little hamlets. They have been ruthless in their arrogant assurance of victory. As I have said before, I would not care to be a German when that vengeful Red Army goes pouring into Germany, to collect the debts listed on that long war bill so carefully computed.

Of course, that was all rather academic right then. It looked, indeed, as if Russia would do well to hang on to Stalingrad, let alone go barging westward. The Russians themselves gave no indication of their intentions about a westward drive, probably because only the top members of the High Command knew that there were such intentions.

And those top members were very quiet. They let the people grumble about a second front, as they had let Wendell Willkie shout about it when he was in Moscow just before I got there. No one in that High Command drew Willkie to one side and said:

"Listen. We appreciate you saying all these things. But do you know that the soldiers of your country are

already on the way? They're going to invade North Africa, with their British comrades. It may not be a second front, but it's such a long step toward it that there really isn't any use singing the song you're singing."

The old Russian secrecy again. Stalin knew what was in the wind. His chief assistants knew. Half a dozen foreign diplomats in Moscow knew.

Meanwhile, one flaming torch had been lighted in the darkness of the Moscow blackout. The Bolshoi Theater, catercorner across the square from the Metropole, had been one of the few buildings damaged in that first and only air raid on the Russian capital.

The damage was not severe but its pillared façade had been torn by an otherwise harmless bomb. The interior of the theater was unharmed, and the ballet continued to play to packed houses.

Then, in early November, workmen began erecting scaffolding across the front of the Bolshoi. Repairs began. It was too big a job to do in a few days, and so there was a special dispensation about light there. And the white front of the Bolshoi glittered under floodlights throughout the blackout, while carpenters hammered and painters splashed white lead.

Naturally the word went round that Stalin was to make his annual speech on the November 6th eve of the Bolshevik anniversary in the Bolshoi. Why else all these hurried preparations? The year before, the premier had made his anniversary speech deep in a subway station. Everybody agreed that his evident intention of making the speech inaugurating the twenty-fifth anniversary in Moscow's most famous theater reflected a much better outlook on the war situation.

When November 6th arrived, Stalin made his speech

in the Kremlin. The Bolshoi repairs had been a decoy to mislead the Germans if they were planning a raid for that occasion. No one knew until the last moment where the speech was going to be made. And then, for the first time in twenty-five years, the foreign press was not invited.

I was sorry about that, because I would have liked to see the man. But it didn't occur to me to be angry about it. Not so with some of the old-timers. They took it as a personal affront and began planning reprisals. It just shows the condition men get into, even such supposedly objective and hard-boiled men as foreign correspondents, from living too long in the conditions prevailing in Moscow.

Little Polgonov was giving a cocktail party for the press a couple of days later, and these reporters who felt Stalin had stepped on their toes tried to drum up a general press boycott of the party.

I couldn't see that I would put Stalin in his place and make him tremble before the power of the press by staying away from a party given by such a little underling as Polgonov. Besides, I like caviar and vodka; at least I like vodka better than nothing at all. As it turned out, most of the press was at the Polgonov party. A few die-hard holdouts did stay away, but I couldn't see that their boycott had any result other than to leave more food and drink for the rest.

Stalin's speech was a curious document. He failed to give any hint of what he knew—that the British and Americans were landing in North Africa next day. In fact, he launched into a tirade about the lack of a second front, blaming all Russia's trials on that fact.

He said there would be a second front in Europe, "sooner or later," but made plain he believed Russia's

allies would open such a front because they needed it as much as Russia did.

Stalin said that, because there was no second front to divert enemy strength from the Russian front, the Red Army was faced with 179 of Germany's 256 divisions, besides enough Axis satellite divisions to bring the total to 240.

He contrasted with this the number of German divisions the British Eighth Army had engaged in Libya. The Russian word for four is *chitiri*, and he repeated it for emphasis.

The Libyan front, he said, was diverting in all from the Russian front "*chitiri—chitiri*" German divisions. Here, for the record, is what Stalin had to say that night about a second front, speaking in the full knowledge which was hidden from his people of what was going to happen on the following day.

"The chief reason for the tactical successes of the Germans on our front this year," he said, "is that the absence of a second front in Europe enabled them to hurl on to our front all their available reserves and create a big superiority of forces.

"Let us assume that a second front existed in Europe, as it existed in the First World War, and that the second front diverted, let us say, sixty German divisions and twenty divisions of Germany's allies. What would have been the position of the German troops on our front then? It is not difficult to guess that their position would be deplorable. More, it would have been the beginning of the end of the German Fascist troops, for in that case the Red Army would not be where it is now but somewhere near Pskov, Minsk, Zhitomir, and Odessa.

"That means that in the summer of this year (1942) the German Fascist Army would have been on the verge of

254 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

disaster, and if that did not occur, it was because the Germans were saved by the absence of a second front in Europe. . . .

"What is the position now? According to authenticated information which is beyond all doubt, of the 256 divisions which Germany now has, not less than 179 German divisions are on our front.

"If to this we add twenty-two Rumanian divisions, fourteen Finnish divisions, ten Italian divisions, thirteen Hungarian divisions, one Slovak division, and one Spanish division, we get a total of 240 divisions now fighting on our front.

"The remaining divisions of Germany and her allies are performing garrison service in the occupied countries (France, Belgium, Norway, Holland, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc.) while part of them are fighting in Libya for Egypt against Great Britain, with the Libyan front diverting in all four—four—German divisions and eleven Italian divisions."

Of the chances of there being a second front in Europe, and remember he knew every detail of the Anglo-American plan concerning North Africa, Stalin had this to say:

"It is often asked: 'But will there be a second front in Europe after all?' Yes there will be, sooner or later there will be one. And it will be not only because we need it but, and above all, because our allies need it no less than we do. Our allies can not fail to realize that since France has been put out of action, the absence of a second front against Fascist Germany may end badly for all the freedom-loving countries, including the allies themselves."

Well, that was that.

Find out why Stalin went out of his way that night to detract from the greatness of British effort in Libya, which was already driving the vaunted Africa Corps up toward

Tunisia, why he intimated we had not done all we could, when he knew what was planned for the next day, and perhaps you will unlock the mystery of Russian character.

So the papers came out next morning with this second-front slur splashed across pages which within twenty-four hours would tell of the great landings of British and American troops in Africa.

Even then, Stalin held his peace, and the papers, waiting to have their policy set for them, printed but scantiest news of the event which was the best break Russia had had since it entered the war. For six days he said nothing, and so the papers and the radio said only next to nothing. They printed brief British news agency despatches of the African offensive, on the back page along with routine foreign news. But no editorials. No comment. No word of pleasure or appreciation.

Then Stalin spoke.

He chose a medium he had used about a month before: he answered a letter from Henry Cassidy of the A.P.

To understand that Cassidy correspondence, which was of historic importance, it is necessary to have a little background on press methods in Moscow.

Almost all the reporters there, from long experience in being able to get no information elsewhere, were in the habit of writing direct to Stalin at least once a week, some of them two and three times a week.

Until shortly before I arrived in Moscow no one had ever got an answer, but it was a way to pass the long winter evenings. He might answer some day. Besides, what else could you do?

Then suddenly Stalin did answer a letter, a letter from Henry. When I arrived I asked him how this happened, and he told me no one was more surprised than he. But

256 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

he is a modest man, and I think Stalin chose both knowingly and well.

In the first place Stalin wanted to say something. He knew that if he merely issued a statement there were a great many people in the democratic countries who would take it as straight propaganda.

So he used a system of indirection. He let his statement be a reply to questions from the news representative of a democratic country. He selected the Associated Press, the largest American agency, and its chief correspondent, a man of great ability and beyond reproach in any way. Who could criticize him for merely giving a courteous answer to courteous questions? Who could call that propaganda?

That system worked so well the first time that he used it again when he wanted to straighten out things which perhaps had got a little confused as a result of his anniversary speech. On November 13th, six days after the invasion of North Africa, Stalin sent the following letter to Cassidy, for sharing with other news agencies and publication throughout the world:

DEAR MR. CASSIDY:

I answer your questions, sent on November 12th.

1. How does the Soviet side estimate the Allied campaign in Africa?

Answer: The Soviet side considers this campaign as a prominent fact of great importance, demonstrating the growing might of the Allied armed forces, and opening up a perspective of disintegration of the German-Italian coalition in the near future.

The campaign in Africa once more disproves those skeptics who insist that the Anglo-American leaders are incapable of organizing a serious military campaign. There can be no doubt that only first-class organizers could have carried out such serious military operations as successful landings in

North Africa across the ocean, rapid taking of ports and spacious territories from Casablanca to Bougie, and the defeat of German-Italian troops in the western desert, which is being so perfectly carried out.

2. To what extent is this campaign effective in the sense of decrease of pressure on the Soviet Union, and what other further help does the Soviet Union expect?

Answer: It is yet early to speak of the extent of the effectiveness of this campaign in the sense of a diminution of pressure on the Soviet Union. But it can be said with assurance that the effect will be not inconsiderable, and that a certain decrease in the pressure on the Soviet Union will take place in the near future.

However, the most important thing is that because the campaign in Africa means that the initiative has passed into the hands of our allies, it changes radically the military-political situation in Europe in favor of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition.

It undermines the authority of Hitler Germany as a leading force in the system of the Axis powers, and demoralizes Hitler's allies in Europe. It leads France out of a condition of stupor; it mobilizes the anti-Hitler forces of France and supplies a base for the organization of an anti-Hitler French army.

It creates conditions for putting Italy out of action, and for isolation of Hitler Germany. Lastly, it creates prerequisites for the organization of a second front in Europe closer to the vital centers of Germany, which will have a decisive significance in the organization of victory over Hitler tyranny.

3. What is the probability of the joining of the Soviet offensive force in the East with the allies in the West for the purpose of expediting the final victory?

Answer: There can be no doubt that the Red Army will carry out with honor its problem, just as it has in the course of the entire war.

That letter, so astoundingly different in tone and context from the speech of six days earlier, was signed "With respects, J. Stalin."

Well, for all that you couldn't make much sense out of

it all, it was a great news beat for Henry, and fun was had by all for several days. Except perhaps Henry Shapiro. As a newcomer I didn't feel that I had been a real contender in the Stalin sweepstakes, though I must admit I had dropped a couple of letters in the mail myself. But Shapiro was direct opposition to Cassidy, and the boys did rub it in a bit, tempers being what they were. Shapiro took it with good grace; he's a good reporter and a good man.

It was at one of our gloomy, cold, and unappetizing suppers just after all this happened that Henry and I were gagging down some *balik* and it came out in conversation that he was writing a book. I asked him what his working title was, and he said *Russian Report*.

Now, when it comes to titles for unwritten books I'm just like one of those women who are always trying to tell their friends whom they should marry. I'm not very good at picking titles for my own books, but I always seem to think I'm perfect at choosing titles for other authors. I remember in 1935 Webb Miller told me about a book he meant to write, a book about himself and all his experiences, how he'd come off a farm, shy, frightened at the world, and gone just about everywhere. I had his title for him just like that.

"Call it *Farm Boy Round the World*," I said, "and I bet it will sell."

He didn't call it that. He called it *I Found No Peace*, and it sold beyond anything I had in mind when I talked with him.

But I still like to pick titles. So when Henry told me about his choice of *Russian Report*, I told him that was terrible. I reminded him that Stalin had written him, and him alone, on two separate occasions.

"Capitalize on that," I urged him. "Call it *Stalin Told Me*, and you can't miss."

Henry didn't take my advice. But he did change his working title to *Moscow Dateline* and it's doing very well. It deserves to.

Besides Stalin's pre-anniversary speech, there was one other interesting feature of the nation's celebration of their "October revolution." That revolution occurred on October 25th, according to the old Czarist calendar, which was two weeks "slower" than ours. Later the Bolsheviks adopted our calendar, so their anniversary of October 25th now falls on November 7th, but they still call it the October revolution.

Well, through all the first quarter-century of the Red régime it had been customary to stage a great show of military might in Red Square on November 7th. Ever since Stalin came to power it had been his custom on that day to mount to the top of Lenin's tomb, review his troops, and make a saber-rattling speech for foreign consumption, to warn the world of Russia's might.

He followed that routine even on November 7th, 1941, a few weeks after Germany had struck. That, I think, must have been a pure gesture of defiance. There was no longer any purpose in warning Germany against attacking Russia; she had attacked. But Chancellor Hitler had announced in Berlin that there would be no Red Army parade in Red Square on that November 7th, because "the German Army will be there."

Stalin couldn't ignore a challenge like that. He ordered the parade to be held. It was held, but not quite as usual. It was smaller than in former years; neither men nor machines of war could be spared from the front in sufficient numbers to hold the usual grandiose procession. And in-

stead of holding it in the middle of the day, it was held at dawn. It was a sort of sneak review, but it was enough to give the lie to Hitler's boast.

As November 7th of 1942 approached there was widespread speculation about the Red Square parade. Apparently, it was going to be held. There was no public announcement, but the usual preparations were made for all to see. The walls of the Kremlin were hung with red banners. Great billboard likenesses of Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, and the principal generals appeared in even greater profusion than usual on every street corner. The tomb of Lenin was decorated again as though for use once more as a reviewing stand.

Incidentally, I was spared the sight of Lenin's stuffed body when I was in Russia. If this reputedly perfect example of human taxidermy had still been open to public view I suppose that either curiosity or a sense of professional responsibility would have made me look. But after war broke out in Russia the tomb was closed to sight-seers, and a sentry paced with bayonet fixed on his rifle at the foot of the stairs leading to the top of the tomb.

There were various rumors as to the cause for this. I was told that Lenin's corpse had been smuggled from the tomb at night to be buried in some Kremlin dungeon lest German bombs destroy it. And I was also told that certain chemicals with which the body had to be treated every year were now essential for war uses. Death, the purveyors of this tale whispered, was at last catching up with Lenin, ending his sleeping-beauty rôle.

Anyway, the tomb was decorated as though for reviewing-stand use on November 7, 1942. We believed there was to be at least another token parade, and we all got up in the brittle dawn to catch a look.

And then nothing happened. Nothing happened all day. There was no parade.

No parade, that is, as we found out the next day, in Red Square, in Moscow, anywhere in European Russia. There would of course have been no point in holding one. Certainly the European Axis needed no warning now of Russia's armed might. They were feeling its force every day and every night at Stalingrad. Also, Russia had no men or machines to spare from that battle. So there was no parade in Red Square on that twenty-fifth anniversary, for the first time.

But we learned the next day that Russia is still using such parades as warning to countries it thinks need to be warned. The papers of November 8th told of a tremendous show of military might which had taken place not far from Vladivostok in the Far East. The reason for that was plain. Russia's far eastern border faces Japan. Russia has no illusions about Japanese friendship. And so, on this day when Russia used to warn Europe of her readiness to fight, this time she warned Japan.

That lack of a state of war between Russia and Japan, while Japan is at war with Russia's allies against the European Axis, leads to some peculiar results.

When we used to complain about not being allowed to go to the Russian front, officials would tell us they could not very well let us go without letting the Japanese reporters go also.

"They also represent a country with which Russia is on terms of friendship," we would be told.

"If that friendship is real," I once replied, "why should you object to letting the Jap reporters see what is going on?"

But I couldn't get any answer to that one. Not in words. The answer is plain enough, and there were indications of

262 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

it on every hand. The Russians know very well how thin the line is between peace and war in the east. The locale of their November 7th parade shows that.

Also, the present status of Japanese in Russia shows just what the Russians think. In October of 1941, when Moscow was threatened, the Russian government moved east to Kuibyshev. All foreign embassies were evacuated to that city, and so were all members of the foreign press.

In the spring of 1942 the threat to the capital had passed. So the Russian government returned to Moscow. So did the embassy staffs and the foreign reporters—except the Japanese diplomats and journalists. The question didn't seem to arise there of having to treat the Japanese just the same as Russia's allies. What protests the Japanese may have made about this I don't know. But they didn't take. Throughout 1942, and at least up to the time this is written, the Japs remained back at Kuibyshev.

Once in a while they were allowed to visit Moscow for a day, for some special occasion, but were promptly herded back to Kuibyshev the next day.

I was returning to the Metropole one day from the Foreign Office when I saw the Japs arrive on such a visit. Several cars drew up in front of the hotel as I approached it, and out poured a dozen little grinning men. I didn't know exactly what to do. Here, right in front of me, was the enemy. What should I do? Throw stones at them? Run up and kick a few of them in the stomach? Or just thumb my nose and yell, "Yah, yah"?

As a matter of fact, I just slowed my pace and let them get through the swinging door into the hotel before I entered. By the time I got upstairs, word had spread through the building of the enemy's arrival, and an indignation meeting was in progress.

Before Pearl Harbor, of course, these men had repre-

sented a country friendly to us and Britain, just as they still represented a country friendly to Russia. Their reporters had eaten in the same room, at the same table, as ours. The question was, would they have the nerve to come muscling into our dining-room now? A committee was appointed to call on the hotel management and make stern representations that we would stand for no such treatment. The Japs could not eat in our room.

The committee left and we waited, muttering our indignation and our determination to keep the enemy at a distance. The committee returned very quickly, a little sheepish. There wasn't going to be any trouble. The Japs had beaten us to the gun. They had already told the management that under no circumstances would they eat in the same room with us.

Reading about the Russian anniversary display of armed strength on the side facing Japan, and seeing the Japanese in Moscow, caused me to make some inquiries as to how well Russia actually was defended on her eastern frontier.

There had been reports during that first wild surge of the German armies eastward in 1941 that Russia had only stopped the Nazi drive by bringing a million or so reserves from the Far Eastern Army. I wondered if that army had ever been replenished.

It's hard to check up on things like that, but in this instance I got what I consider reliable information. It was second hand, but in Russia you feel that you're eating right out of the feed box if your information is as good as second hand.

When the foreign diplomats and reporters were sent back to Kuibyshev in the late fall of 1941, I was told, their train was side-tracked time after time to permit the through passage of troop trains going in the opposite

264 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

direction. And those trains were jammed with Russian soldiers, Russians with the flat faces and the slant eyes of Asia. It was generally assumed that reserves were being drawn from the army of the Far East, the army of insurance against Japanese attack. So the story got out that this had actually happened.

But it developed later that those slant-eyed reserves were not from the Far East. They came, instead, from just over the Urals, and they were barely trained Mongol recruits from the western farmlands of Siberia. The army of the Far East was not touched. It still numbered, I was told, three million men, or maybe two. You just can't get exact figures in Russia, generally nothing approaching exactness. But regardless of its size, which certainly was once great, if it is still untouched I think Japan will hesitate a long time before yielding to German pressure for a second Axis front in Russia.

It was not until I had been several weeks in Moscow that I got around to running down the story of food. But when I did, I was astonished at the facts. I well knew by that time that the Russian civilians had little to eat. I knew that the Red Army was well fed, well clothed, and well equipped because the civilians went without. But I hadn't realized the extent of that transfusion of strength to the army from the civilian population. There has never been anything like it in history.

I visited government food stores, I managed to get hold of ration books in various categories, and I talked to such people as would talk to me about the food situation. The figures I gathered are as of November, 1942, and the situation has since been improved, though to what extent I don't know, by lease-lend and other American relief shipments.

The basic food in Russia is bread: black, heavy, coarse, but nonetheless nutritious and even tasty. The daily ration of bread for behind-the-lines consumption was eighteen to twenty-one ounces for "physical workers," fifteen ounces for white-collar folk, and twelve ounces for children and "adult dependents," that is, grown-ups without a job.

The varying amount of bread for physical workers marks the difference between war workers and those in essential but not strictly war jobs. The top amount of twenty-one ounces of bread, and that's very few slices of that heavy bread, is for workers in war supply factories. All other manual workers get the eighteen-ounce ration. A special case is made of blood donors, who also get eighteen ounces, so that they may have more blood to give.

In most countries, meat is considered an important item of food. Of daily food. In Russia it is an occasional treat.

The general meat ration is so small that it's impossible to give the figures per day. Here is the monthly meat ration:

For workers, four pounds and two ounces. That's per month, remember. For white-collar people, two and a quarter pounds. Adult dependents and children, one and one-eighth pound. Monthly!

The cereal ration gives workers three pounds twelve ounces per month, white-collar workers and children two and a quarter pounds. Non-workers get a little under two pounds.

The ration for fats is one and a half pounds per month for workers, three-quarters of a pound for white-collar employees and children, and six ounces for non-workers.

Sugar? Fifteen ounces a month for workers. Nine ounces for white-collar folk and children. Non-workers get six ounces.

266 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

The way the ration books are printed, it would seem that distinction is made between war workers and other manual laborers only in the case of bread. But it doesn't work out that way. The official ration for both classes is the same as to meat, cereals, fats and sugar, but they don't both get the same.

The non-war workers must buy their food, along with the food for white-collar people, children, and the unemployed, at government neighborhood food shops. And those shops don't always have everything the ration books allow. In fact, they seldom have.

But the war workers get their food at what are called "closed food shops" in their own factories. And those closed shops always have what the coupons call for. Or almost always. Most Russians cling to ration books with coupons long overdue. Everything possible is done to supply each item, because the total ration is just about what people can live on and stay well. The minute some overdue item is available for distribution announcement is made through the newspapers and the radio. That may be one reason why you see the Russians standing in long lines every day before the newspaper stands to get their copy of papers which Americans generally think carry nothing but propaganda. It may explain why they stand in the cold before street-corner loudspeakers which for the most part shout only political speeches.

When word comes that one of those overdue food items is available it spreads like fire in straw. "Coupon ten has been announced." Woman whispers it to woman and man to man as they move through the falling snow. And immediately the line-up begins at the regional stores.

There are of course other food items besides the ones I have mentioned. Potatoes are generally available in

small quantities, and cabbage, beets, or even occasionally carrots. There is an occasional egg to be had, and sometimes milk.

Adults seldom get much milk or eggs, however, because the ration for children generally uses up all that can be spared from the army. Children under three get half a liter, something under a pint, of milk per day. Children from three to six get half that amount. All children up to six get ten eggs per month. At least they get coupons for ten eggs a month.

The national drink of Russia is of course vodka, manufacture of which is a government monopoly. But vodka is made of grain, and the rich fields of the Ukraine were no longer sending their grain to the Russian mills when I was there. So while there was a civilian vodka ration of half a liter per month, it was seldom available. There is little danger of widespread alcoholism in Russia.

Another thing that cuts down the vodka supply besides the lost grain fields of the Ukraine is the fact that the Red Army fights under conditions which make some stimulant imperative. Throughout the bitter winter each soldier gets three ounces, one good stiff drink, per day.

Prices in the government food stores are rigidly controlled, and synchronized to the wages of various classes.

A war worker, for instance, gets enough pay to buy everything in his ration book, and also to buy what his children are allowed and to get his wife a non-worker's pittance of food. If she wants to eat as well as the rest of the family she gets herself a job. When she does that, and almost all Russian women do, there is an actual money surplus after everything has been bought that can be bought under the ration system.

There is almost no way to spend money, even to waste it, except on food. So that money surplus is a constant

268 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

temptation to take a fling in pure luxury. Say, like an egg for breakfast.

Also, when part of the regular ration of food is not available, the money surplus is swelled, and at the same time the desire, the need, for extra, outside-the-ration food, is increased. To some extent it is available.

So far as I know there is no Russian black market in food. That would come under the head of speculation, and that is one of the most reprehensible crimes in the Communist code. Many a man, and woman, now working on a collective farm far out on the wind-swept steppes of Siberia, could tell you about the exile punishment for those who put profit before patriotism in Russia. That is, they could tell you if you wanted to go to Siberia to listen. They have small chance of coming out of Siberia.

But while there may be no black market in food, there is an "open market" that supplements the government food stores. The open market in Moscow is a little piece of capitalism right in the middle of collectivism or Communism or whatever you want to call it.

This public market is in a great barn of a building into which a peasant from the outlying collective farms may bring his produce to sell. It represents a trimming of the sails of Communism to meet the winds of human nature. In fact, two trimmings.

Some years ago we used to read stories of how Russian peasants were given quotas they must produce on the collective farms, come rain or drought or freeze. And if they failed, so we were told, the head of that farm was shot or at least imprisoned. However exaggerated those stories may have been, it is true that attempts were made to force farm production as well as factory production. And they just didn't work.

Now the Russian leaders, whatever else you may think

of them, are certainly realists. If something doesn't work they discard it and try something else. This time they went right back to capitalism's incentive system, and that did work.

Instead of merely saying you must raise so much of this and that, "or else," they said your quota of this and that for the state will be so much, and anything you raise above that is yours.

So now the peasants of the collective farms work not merely to reach a figure of production set by the government, but to surpass that figure for their own interest and good. And so those peasants are forever getting little doles of extra food, beyond the amount needed for the army and the government stores. It may be half a dozen eggs, or a gallon of milk, a few pounds of meat, or a half-pound of butter. But whatever it is, it is theirs to do with as they like.

What they like to do with it is carry it into Moscow and sell it in the market, where they can rent a stall for a few kopeks. At first the government tried to control the prices in that market, to make them the same as the reasonable prices of the government stores. That didn't work.

Because there is so little to buy in Russia, money has lost much of its value in the eyes of the people. But the lust for money dies slowly, especially in those who have always had so little. The peasants were willing to sell their surplus food for money, hard money to take home and bury in the ground, but they wanted a lot of money. They wouldn't walk all the way into town and back just for a few rubles. They stopped going to the market.

So the leaders backed down there and said all right, charge anything you want, anything you can get. And the good old capitalistic law of supply and demand became the order of the day in the Moscow market.

270 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

The result has been a market scene which is somewhat astounding. I visited this market and found a brisk trade going on at prices that would make an American think he was having a financial nightmare. And it seemed all the more fantastic because these prices were being paid by people in patched clothes. When a Russian buys his allowance of black bread at a government store he pays one ruble, or about fifteen cents at the official exchange rate, for a kilogram, or two pounds and a fifth. At the open market he pays seventy rubles, or \$10.50, for the same quantity.

Milk for children, and occasionally for adult workers, is sold at the rate of forty-five cents a quart in the government stores. Any one who wants more milk can get it in the open market, if he gets there ahead of the crowd of eager purchasers, for \$7.50 a quart.

When eggs are available in the government stores they are sold at the rate of nine cents apiece. The open market price often rises to \$2.25 an egg.

Meat, when there is any, goes in the government stores at an average price of about \$1.50 per kilo or something like seventy cents a pound. If you're lucky enough to get any in the open market you'll pay \$20 a pound, or more.

In the fixed-price food stores sugar and cereals sell at the equal price of five rubles or seventy-five cents per kilo. In the open market, humanity's sweet tooth forces the cereal and sugar prices far apart. Cereal brings a mere \$7.50 per kilo, just a ten times boost. But sugar soars to six hundred rubles a kilo or the equivalent of \$90. I have heard that there are always ready buyers for such \$40-a-pound sugar, but I didn't see any the day I was there.

One of the most startling prices to me was that charged for butter. We who have always spread it thick on our

bread, used it lavishly in the kitchen, expected it in any quantity on a no-extra-charge basis in restaurants, find it hard to think of butter as being golden in more than color. Even now that it's twelve points a pound there is still ample for the careful housewife.

But butter is very scarce in Russia. So much so that American lard, which was beginning to arrive there while I was in Moscow, was considered a very tasty spread for bread. The butter ration, when there is any at all, is tiny. For what is occasionally available in the food stores, the price is at the rate of \$2 a pound.

If that seems high, take a walk over to the open market and hunt among the stalls until you find a peasant with butter to sell. He'll ask somewhere in the neighborhood of \$50 a pound, and if you don't snap up that bargain the shabby man or woman right behind you will.

I had one other interesting experience with food in Moscow. That was at the Arogvi Restaurant, not far from Red Square. At the Arogvi some semblance of ancient Czarist splendor was maintained, and the food and service were of the old order. Arrangements could be conducted for permission to eat occasionally in one of that restaurant's private rooms: overdecorated *chambres privées* which were still redolent of seduction, espionage, intrigue.

Half a dozen of us made such arrangements and invited as our guest the British Ambassador, Archibald Kerr Clark-Kerr. He's a ruddy, pleasant, fiftyish sort of man. He's young for the ticklish Moscow post, but he went there from another big job for one so young, Ambassador to China. He had come by way of India, where he had formerly served in lesser positions, and had had time there to see what was going on. He's the only British diplomat

272 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

I've talked to who has an outlook on India which is both open and intelligent.

I believe that if any one could solve the Indian problem, either by turning it loose or by keeping it in the Empire, without serious disturbances, it is Clark-Kerr. He would make a splendid viceroy, if there are to be any more Indian viceroys. At least I am sure he would never serve beer with ice in it.

Most of the talks I had with Clark-Kerr, at the Embassy residence and at the Arogvi, led me to the belief that he is aiming his career at three objectives. I think he would like to be Viceroy of India, Ambassador to Washington, and Foreign Minister. I think he probably will be all those things, in that order. I can't believe that Sir Archibald Wavell, with his purely military outlook, can be more than a stopgap at Delhi.

We had a good crowd at that Arogvi dinner. Besides the Ambassador we had Robert Magidoff of N.B.C., Walter Kerr, Henry Cassidy, Eddy Gilmore, Henry Shapiro, Paul Holt of the London *Daily Express*, and Geof Blundell of the Australian press.

And we had good food. White-haired waiters who had been waiters under the Czars—one of them under three Czars—served us iced caviar, smoked salmon that had no resemblance to the Metropole *balik*, real horsch with actually a dab of sour cream floating in it. There was roast chicken with a good gravy, whipped potatoes, cabbage not cooked completely unto death. There were rolls made from almost white flour. There were, most marvelous of all, little curls of yellow butter resting on a sparkling cushion of crushed ice.

The meal began with several drinks of orange vodka. There was a white table wine which didn't mar the wonder of the roast chicken. And after the pirojny, a pastry

cook's chef-d'œuvre, came real coffee in fragile demi-tasses. There was old brandy.

To be perfectly accurate, I must admit that the portions were not large. We were still a little hungry when we were done. But the quality was superb. The service excellent. We were a group of friends, thrown together from far corners of the world by war. If our talk was not brilliant, it seemed so to us at the moment, and that is just as good. It was a perfect meal.

There were nine of us at table. The bill was \$270. Thirty dollars a plate. We gave the waiters a \$50 tip to split among them and two cigarets apiece. They thanked us politely for the money, and bowed from the waist for the tobacco.

It was the next day, I think, that I made my first and only visit to the *Bureau Bin*, the store for foreigners. Natalia Petrovna wanted some cloth for a suit, and she could get it only if I vouched for the fact that it was a business purchase necessary to the conduct of my office. I could do this without a qualm, because Natalia Petrovna's clothes, which she managed to keep looking smart despite their many overhauls, were nevertheless definitely threatening to part at every seam simultaneously. So I signed the application for the cloth she wanted.

While I was in the store I looked around to see what I could find to take home as a souvenir. I hadn't got anything to speak of in India. The A.V.G. boys with their pockets full of bonus money for knocking down Jap Zeros had run the price of semi-precious stones sky-high. I'd got a few rather nice Kashmir pieces, but I'd mailed them home and the chances were scarcely perfect for their arriving. Besides, I wanted something typically Russian.

274 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

There were a few pieces of plain cotton lingerie, some of those big white boots that so many Russians wear and that look like molded plaster of Paris, half a dozen men's suits that looked like the make-me-an-offer hand-me-downs of an East Side pull-in store.

But then I saw something I liked. In a glass case were half a dozen pairs of tiny knitted babies' gloves. They certainly weren't anything to shout about, just plain white knitting with a little colored embroidery on the backs; I imagine Mrs. Roosevelt could whip up a pair of gloves like that while dictating one newspaper column. But to me they represented Russian workmanship, and I wanted them. Even when I discovered they were three dollars a pair.

Thinking particularly of my own baby, now a year old though I still thought of her as I'd last seen her at the age of four months, but also quickly counting baby nieces and nephews, I asked Natalia Petrovna to tell the clerk I'd take all six pairs.

The clerk smiled but she said, "*Niet*," a word the Russians use frequently and which means "No."

Natalia Petrovna explained that one was permitted to buy only for one's self, to fill actual needs. As I was a man correspondent I could buy things only for a man. I asked the clerk, through Natalia Petrovna, how many infant foreign correspondents there were in Moscow who would be eligible for the gloves. She didn't seem amused. She just said something that had *nitchivo* in it. That word means literally "nothing," but it's one of those general-purpose words that can be applied for any sort of brush-off.

Natalia Petrovna really went to work then. There were speeches and counter-speeches. Natalia Petrovna pleaded. The clerk was adamant. Natalia Petrovna threatened. The clerk was scornful. It was like a play. And finally there

was a third-act climax. The clerk relented. She compromised. She would let me have one pair of the baby gloves if I would sign a paper saying I would not buy or ask to buy any gloves for my own hands for the rest of the winter. I agreed. I signed. I got the little gloves.

It was not until some time after I got home that my wife happened to turn back the wrist of one of these little emblems of Russian art and industry and found a label reading "Made in China."

I didn't stay in Russia long enough to gain any proficiency in the language. In fact, because I knew my stay was to be brief, I made no effort to learn even the rudiments. I learned such words as were absolutely necessary, picked up a few others the way you pick up the measles, simply by exposure, and depended for the rest on my colleagues.

Most of them were at least fairly proficient in Russian. And of course to some of them it was second nature. Irina Scariatina of *Collier's* was born in Leningrad, as was Alexander Werth. Then there were Maurice Hindus, who was doing special stuff for the *Herald Tribune*, Magidoff of N.B.C., Shapiro and Myer Handler of the U.P., all of whom are of Russian blood.

In the next rank were the boys who had been in Russia over a year, like Cassidy, Kerr, and even Eddy Gilmore who spoke with great facility though I was told with complete disregard for grammar. Lee Stowe had a smattering, and Ed Snow, who went in just ahead of me, worked hard with a teacher and was really getting somewhere by the time I left.

I learned the first of my few words from Eddy in Teheran, on my way into Russia. He impressed upon me the natural politeness of the Russian people, and the

276 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

necessity of always remembering your "thank yous" and "pleases."

So I learned that thank you is *sposiba* and that please is *pajolista*. Also I learned from Eddy, though the others said he hadn't discovered Russian grammar, that the *ski* ending which many Americans seem to think terminates all Russian words is actually only for adjectives.

For instance, he told me that if on my journey in any one spoke to me I could just say "*Ya Americanitz*," meaning that I was an American, or "*Ya correspondiente Americaniski*," meaning I was an American correspondent. I tried them both, but never found any one who seemed particularly interested in either version of my identity.

After I got to Moscow I picked up *Da* and *Niet*, for yes and no, *nitchivo* for almost anything negative, and the numbers from one to ten so I would use the telephone. I also find filed in my memory the fact that the Russian for blondie is *blondinka*, but I can't recall how I ever came to discover that.

Although I knew so little of the language it was a Russian word, tossed lightly in my face by Polgonov, that determined the date of my departure. That was the word *pajolista*, which, like *nitchivo*, has a literal meaning and then a whole scale of extra meanings.

Pajolista means "please." But it is also used to shrug somebody off, in the sense of "Do as you please" or "Suit yourself."

I finally decided that there was no sense in my staying in Russia any longer unless I could get to the front. Natalia Petrovna was well able to carry on the selection and transmission of news from the papers and communiqués. She could send background stuff about places and people in the news better than I could. In Moscow I had seen

and heard as much in a few weeks as I was likely to see or hear if I stayed a year. I was already two months overdue getting home, and I do have a family. I decided to see Polgonov and lay it on the line.

He blinked at me through his thick glasses and asked me in what he considered French what he could do for me. I replied in what I call French that I really must get to the front.

"But, of course," he beamed. "Your trip to the front. I have made all the necessary applications. Now all we have to do is wait."

"But wait how long?" I asked him. "A week? A month? Six months?"

He shrugged all the way up to his ears, and I decided to be firm.

"Look," I said, "I am anxious to stay here and send news of Russia to America. I hope that news will be such that it may increase American understanding of Russia. I hope it may be such that it will result in an increase of lease-lend material to Russia. But I can justify staying here only if I am allowed to go to the front. If I can't get a definite assurance of an early trip to the front I am going to make arrangements right now to leave."

Polgonov spread his hands, palms up, in a gesture of complete indifference.

"*Pajolista*," he said.

I knew when I was beaten. I applied for passage on the Red Army plane for Teheran leaving on November 19th, and was given a priority ticket.

I left Moscow in a snowy dawn, driving out Gorky Street to the airport in a car furnished by Intourist. I wasn't sure I liked the whole-hearted efficiency with which I was helped to leave Russia. The Metropole had

278 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

even put me up some lunch in a little cardboard box. There was a small charge of about six dollars for that, but even so. . . .

It may have been the time of day, that low-spirited hour of ebb energy between the night and the day, but for one reason or another I felt sad at leaving Moscow. I felt a great friendliness for the old women who even at that hour were shuffling about the streets, sweeping up the never-ending snow. I felt tremendous admiration for those other, younger women who were represented by great piles of wood heaped at street corners.

That wood is as good a measure as I know of behind-the-lines fortitude. You see, Russia approached the winter of 1942 with the prospect of almost no heat. All the available oil was needed for the war. All the coal not in German hands would have to go to the factories. But Russia has great forests. If Russia was to have heat it would have to come from those trees.

So the women of Moscow were mobilized into logging crews. Two hundred thousand women. Of course there weren't so many women really available in the ordinary sense of that word. Every Russian woman was already doing something that would come under the head of essential work in America even now.

But they were taken from office desks, from farms, from factories. Their children were installed in collective nurseries. And they went into the forests and felled trees and cut them up into logs. The wood was brought into Moscow and dumped at street corners. It was distributed at night in tram cars, when they were not needed for transporting workers to their factories and offices.

But the women who cut that wood received none of it to keep their homes warm. There wasn't enough for that; not enough for heat in any private residence. The wood

was distributed to hospitals and nurseries and such schools as were still open, grade schools. To government offices in some degree, and to hotels to such extent that at the Metropole we were not always numb if we wore clothes enough.

And the women who cut the wood, the other workers who doubled up their already strenuous duties so the women could be freed for wood-cutting: they just shivered through the winter as best they could. After all, taking off one's clothes at night is just a habit, like washing in warm water.

In such conditions the Russians spent last winter. So very little food to heat them from within. No fire to heat them from outside. Yet I never heard of a single instance of the theft of so much as one log of that wood, though it lay unguarded in the street while awaiting distribution.

As I drove down Gorky Street on my last morning in Moscow I thought of these things. And I was sad at leaving. It seemed to me that I was deliberately walking away from a race of superfolk who had somehow risen above vanity and greed and any form of selfishness; to return to a softer life among little people who still bargained with destiny, compromised with responsibility, shut their eyes against the beckoning finger of duty.

I would have been even more reluctant to leave if I had known what was happening at that very moment on the front. For while I rode to the airport, tens of thousands of soldiers in white suits were running crouched across the snowfields both north and south of Stalingrad. The Volga boatmen were ferrying other thousands across the river as fast as they could. The great winter offensive was on, an offensive which was to continue uninterrupted for four months before the spring floods slowed it down.

The Red armies were tasting victory for the first time

280 *Seventy Thousand Miles of War*

in a year, and yet life went on without noticeable change behind the lines. The Russians had learned the lesson that the tides of war ebb and flow like the tides of the sea. They wasted no time or emotion in celebration which might prove unwarranted by to-morrow's communiqué.

During those three days in the air over the snowfields of the Russian steppes, over the ice of the Caspian, the mountains guarding the Caucasus, I spent my time adding up all that I had experienced in Russia. Trying to find out what it all meant. You can do a lot of thinking in three days, traveling with nothing else to do, surrounded by people whose speech is meaningless to you.

Russia had convinced me that one theory of mine about war is correct. The theory is that almost any country, any great power at least, can win a war if it wants to, if everybody in it wants to and wants to beyond anything else in life.

Armies are but one weapon of modern war. The civilian population is a far more important weapon. The old theory that a country can be defended by its army alone—"that's what the army's for"—has gone by the board. It has caused the downfall of a dozen countries in this war. Hardly any country can be beaten if every man, woman and child is "in the army," whether in uniform or not. Hardly any country can be beaten if every inhabitant is ready to live entirely for the prosecution of the war, and to die for it if necessary.

Russia is such a country. I don't believe that any power on earth can defeat her.

After the First World War Russia was a broken nation. It pulled itself back to position as a great power by its boot-straps. The secret of that feat was the series of five year plans, a series of definite schedules for living which

the people believed in, and worked for. There were three five year plans, and each one brought Russia nearer her goal. When the war came, the "plan" system was merely translated into new terms. Russia is ready to carry through another five year plan, or if need be a fifty year plan, to win the war.

It wasn't until I got home that I discovered how fully Russia's power of solidarity is appreciated in America, and feared. On every hand I heard open cheers for the Russians, because they were giving us time we sorely needed in North Africa. But also on every hand I heard whispers of post-war fears.

After the war. How about Russia after the war? Will Russia want to communize Europe? America? Will she make virtual colonies out of the rest of Europe, or big parts of it? Will she dominate world trade? Squeeze us dry? Will we have to fight her in the end?

Now, most of these fears are just plain bunk. We have been reared in the fear and hatred of Communism, though we have never bothered to find out what it's really all about. This fear and hatred have been played upon by Axis propagandists to weaken the rather fluid cement which binds the United Nations. That propaganda has been very successful.

I don't mean that I believe the spirit of sweetness and light, of brotherly love, of all self-sacrifice, has its fount in Russia. I don't mean that I think Communism would be a good thing for America, or Europe. I don't mean that I think we can expect Russia to do just as we would like after the war. None of those things; not for a minute.

But I don't believe, either, that Russia is going to gobble us up; is even hungry for us. It was Trotsky, you remember, who believed that Communism could work only if all nations were communistic, and so he plugged for world

revolution. The Russia of Stalin is convinced it can flourish in one land alone, which makes world revolution unnecessary. Of course, the Stalinites may believe that it would be a little easier to make Communism work in Russia if other great powers lined up. Not essential, but nice. And because of that I don't think for a minute that the Soviet government, which is a Communist government, will after the war withhold encouragement or even material support from any foreign group that asks for guidance. Like the Communist Party of America, or England, or France. But that's a different thing from trying to ram it down our throats by the actual fomenting of revolution. Disbandment of the Comintern is Russia's pledge that she won't try to ram it down our throats. Any Communist trouble we have in this country starts in this country, like any other trouble, regardless of what aid and comfort it may enlist from abroad, and the place to stamp it out is in this country.

From what I have seen of Russia, of the Russians, I believe we must expect a very realistic approach to the post-war problems from the Russian government. We must be prepared to meet that approach with realism or we will have some rude shocks coming to us.

The matter of territory, for instance, is going to get all tangled up in the Atlantic Charter, which is about as dependable as campaign oratory or a lover's promise.

There may come announcements from the Kremlin that Russia seeks no new territory. But what is new territory? Does that mean the same thing when a Russian says it as when a Pole says it, or we say it? Not for a minute.

After the first war, when Russia was broken and helpless, the peacemakers stripped her of the Baltic States, of part of the Karelian Isthmus, of part of White Russia and the Ukraine, of Bessarabia. It may be that Russia will

demand return of all the land she lost by the first war. Nothing new, she may say, but definitely what is ours by right. Russia's rupture of relations with the exile Polish government of the late Premier Sikorski may be first step to such demand. Sikorski had insisted on post-war reestablishment of 1939 frontiers.

If Russia wants all that territory back, and takes it, what can we do? What can England do? For all the pretty phrases of the Atlantic Charter. All we can do is to admit honestly that Russia has earned her right to a very loud voice at the peace table, and try for some compromise as fair as possible to all.

The last place I stood on Russian soil was the same as the first, the airport at Baku.

The customs men made a very cursory examination of baggage; there is nothing in Russia to take out. But their collection of money was thorough. No one made any objection. The money is no good once it's out of the country. I shelled out what I had, the equivalent at our exchange rate of seventy-some dollars. The inspector took it, down to the last kopek, and gave me a receipt. It said I can get the money back, next time I pass through Baku.

We soared over the mountains that rise on every side of Teheran and slid down toward the sunny valley. Looking north I took a last glimpse of Russia, whose people were fighting as no nation ever fought before. I had no penny in my pocket, not even taxi fare to the hotel, but I felt somehow richer than ever in my life. I had known, however briefly, the nation which I think above all others has surveyed a straight, undeviating road into the future.

12. "... Like Thunder"

I SAID THAT THE CUSTOMS MEN at Baku took my last kopek from me, that I arrived back in Teheran without a sou in any man's money. And the airport there is a good ten miles from town. So what did I do? I took a taxi.

I told the taxi man to take me to the Ferdowsie, and when we arrived I told him to wait. The clerk remembered me by name, and I asked him to pay my taxi bill.

"Certainly, Mr. Chaplin," he said, "and will you be wanting a room?"

"No," I was forced to admit, "I am going on up to the Darband, but you pay the taxi bill and it will be all right."

Then I went up to Mary Brock's room, and she was having tea again. Without any question she let me borrow a hundred tomans, which is a little over thirty dollars, and I was rich again. With that cash I sent a cable to New York for money and took a taxi to the Darband, where Timmy and the rest greeted me as a prodigal son.

I had to wait a week for a plane bound for Miami, and so I had time to think. Here are my thoughts.

It took several days for me to make anything out of it all, but then the outline began to appear.

I went back over the whole eight months of this assignment first, then on back over all I had seen in France, at home, in the Pacific. I went back over all the details of almost four years since the war began and asked myself what it added up to. At first the only answer I could get was that it added up to nothing.

But then things began to fall into place, to make some sense. And finally I realized that while I had been in Russia a tremendous thing had happened.

Just before I went in the British Eighth Army had won the battle of El Alamein, which seemed merely an incident at the time. But it really started the whole business; it really marked the turn of the tide. Then the Allied troops had landed in North Africa, and a few days later the Red Army began its historic winter offensive.

The three things were parts of one great offensive. At last, oh, at very long last, the British had recovered from that slump into defensiveness into which Hitler had thrown them by his first great psychological coup of not attacking by air in 1939. At last America had roused itself from isolationism. At last Russia could fight with some assurance that she was not fighting alone.

I realized finally that during the period of this assignment I had witnessed a miracle. Alamein, Stalingrad, and Tunisia. The United Nations. Out of the darkness of four years of frustration, suddenly we had emerged into the light. Everywhere the guns of the Allies were thundering. It was the thunder of the dawn—invasion's dawn.

Conclusion

SINCE I RETURNED from Russia to America, the pattern that I saw roughly blocked out while I was in Moscow has taken definite shape. Since then we have cleared North Africa, conquered Sicily, brought Italy to unconditional surrender. Russia has swept on westward to assail the German defenses of the Dnieper.

Barring an attack of home-front over-confidence and lethargy, we are now certain to win the war. The fighting war. I don't know how soon but the best I can bring myself to hope for is victory over the European Axis in 1944 and over the Asiatic Axis a year later.

I have found disturbing tendencies here at home. The cement which binds the United Nations is still a fluid cement. A great many in this country still don't trust Russia, not as a post-war ally. Many don't even trust Britain in that rôle. I can only hope the war does not end before we have conquered ourselves.

If we can do that before the shooting stops, then we can approach peace as a great brotherhood of nations comprising an invincible world army capable of crushing

any incipient move toward war anywhere. If we don't do that, if we go to the peace table each man distrusting his neighbor, unwilling to give as well as receive...well, then I can foresee only such anarchy as will make this war look like a school-yard quarrel.

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